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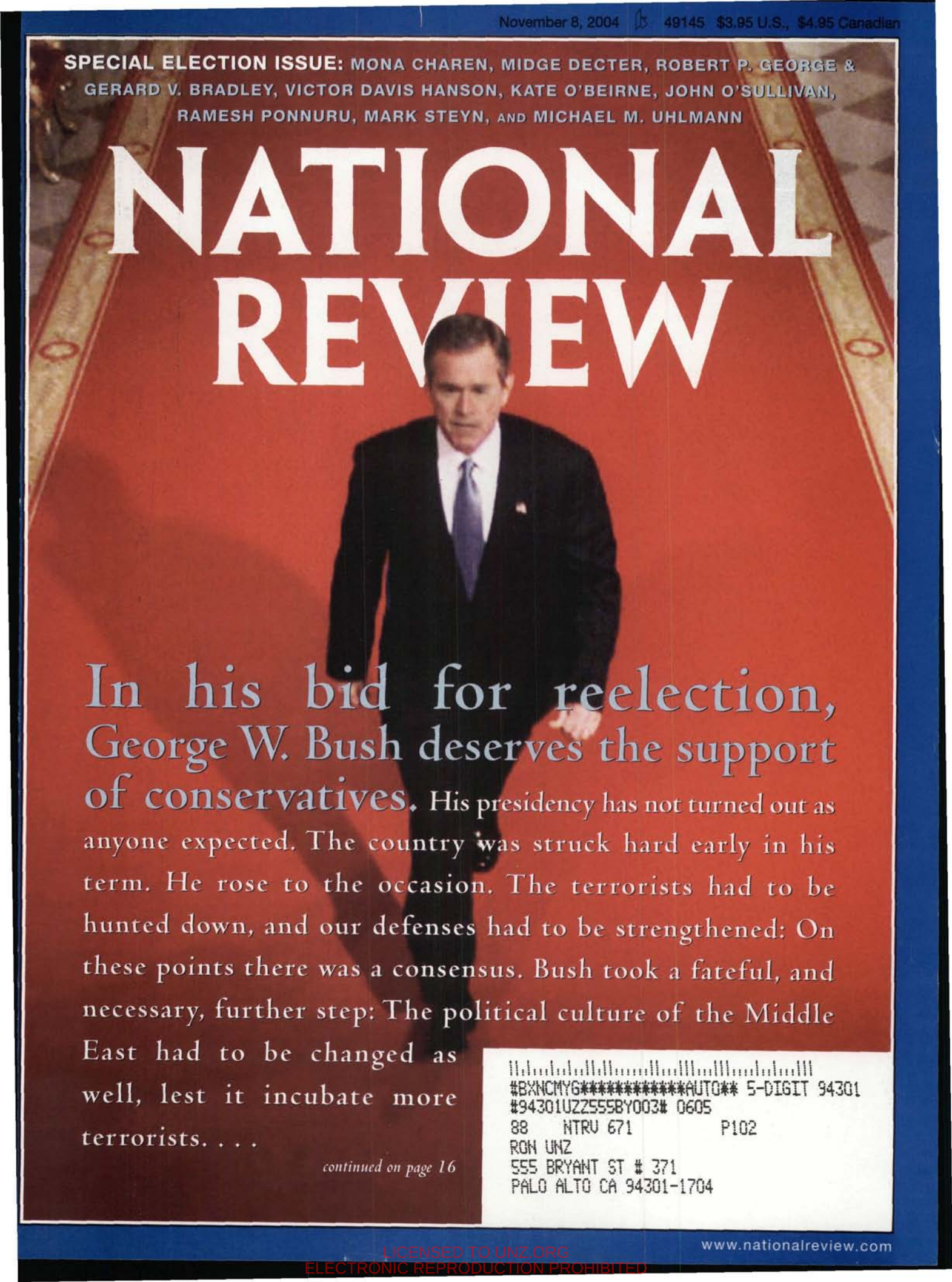
NATIONAL REVIEW



In his bid for reelection, George W. Bush deserves the support of conservatives.

His presidency has not turned out as anyone expected. The country was struck hard early in his term. He rose to the occasion. The terrorists had to be hunted down, and our defenses had to be strengthened: On these points there was a consensus. Bush took a fateful, and necessary, further step: The political culture of the Middle East had to be changed as well, lest it incubate more terrorists. . . .

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NATIONAL REVIEW

NOVEMBER 8, 2004 VOL. LVI, NO. 21

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■ FEATURE

Country at a Crossroads

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This election marks a crossroads in our history. We are presented with two radically different presidential candidates with profound disagreements about how to conduct a historic worldwide war. We are faced with a choice between a president whose call for patience and sacrifice promises victory, and a pessimist stirring the people with the assurances that we should not have fought, and now cannot win, the present war in Iraq. *By Victor Davis Hanson*

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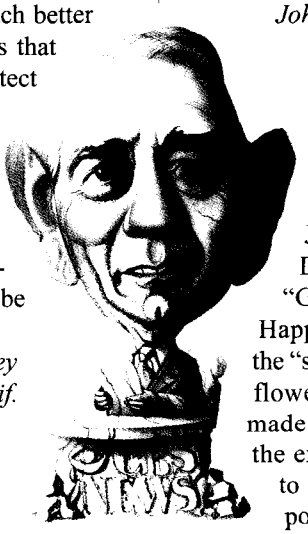
letters to the editor

BUFFETTVILLE

I was very impressed with John Berlau's incisive analysis of Warren Buffett's support of the estate tax ("Buffetted," Aug. 23). When someone as rich as Buffett espouses what seems to be so "unselfish" a view it immediately arouses suspicion. I am part of the insurance industry, which feeds heavily off the estate tax, and I agree with the experts cited that all of the professional activity and costs associated with estate-tax planning are wasteful and counterproductive. The insurance is expensive, because it is usually purchased late in life; the legal services required to structure the insurance and various other trusts are also expensive. This money would be much better placed into the businesses that families are trying to protect and keep.

Worst of all, however, the estate tax is the most egregious example of exploiting the tax code for the purpose of redistributing wealth. It should be permanently abolished.

Steve Carney
Santa Barbara, Calif.



MORE FOR LESS

Richard Vedder is right on the mark in saying that Americans are paying much more for higher education but getting less serious learning ("A Fortune in Tuition," Oct. 11). As more and more federal, state, and private funding has become available for students to enter college, many institutions have relaxed their admissions requirements to maximize enrollments and revenue. This has coincided with a great erosion of academic rigor in K-12 education. Many of the students entering college expect it to be easy and fun. Rather than let those students who will not adjust to college standards flunk out, many schools let standards slide and allow the curriculum to be overrun by fluff courses.

With vast numbers of young people earning B.A. degrees every year, a college degree has become a requirement for many jobs that any respectably educated high-school student could do. The deluge of college graduates is so large that ever-greater numbers of them wind up delivering pizza and selling video games. Rather than provide an education, many schools merely sell an expensive credential of dubious value.

Government education subsidies bear most of the responsibility for this sorry state of affairs. I agree with Vedder's statement that "a compelling case can be made that government should get out of the higher-education business."

George C. Leef
John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy
Raleigh, N.C.

RATHER DELIGHTFUL

I must say I have never been so entertained as when Jonah Goldberg referred to Dan Rather's unraveling as "God's Own Piñata" ("Oh Happy Day!" Oct. 11). Indeed, the "sweet, sweet goodness" that flowed from this story simply made my day! Please continue the excellent work as you seek to expose those who use the power of the media to further their own agendas through lies and distortion.

Let's hope that the fall of Dan Rather will herald a new era in journalistic integrity, his shoes filled by someone with a fresh, new voice—someone who will (dare I say?) report the news.

Elizabeth Hrusch
Thompson, Ohio

After reading Jonah Goldberg's delicious article on Dan Rather I wondered, What does his writing remind me of? A fine wine? A smoky brandy? Finally I settled on a large and frosty milkshake. Fun, frivolous, naughty—and you always want more.

John Ducker
Hurdle Mills, N.C.

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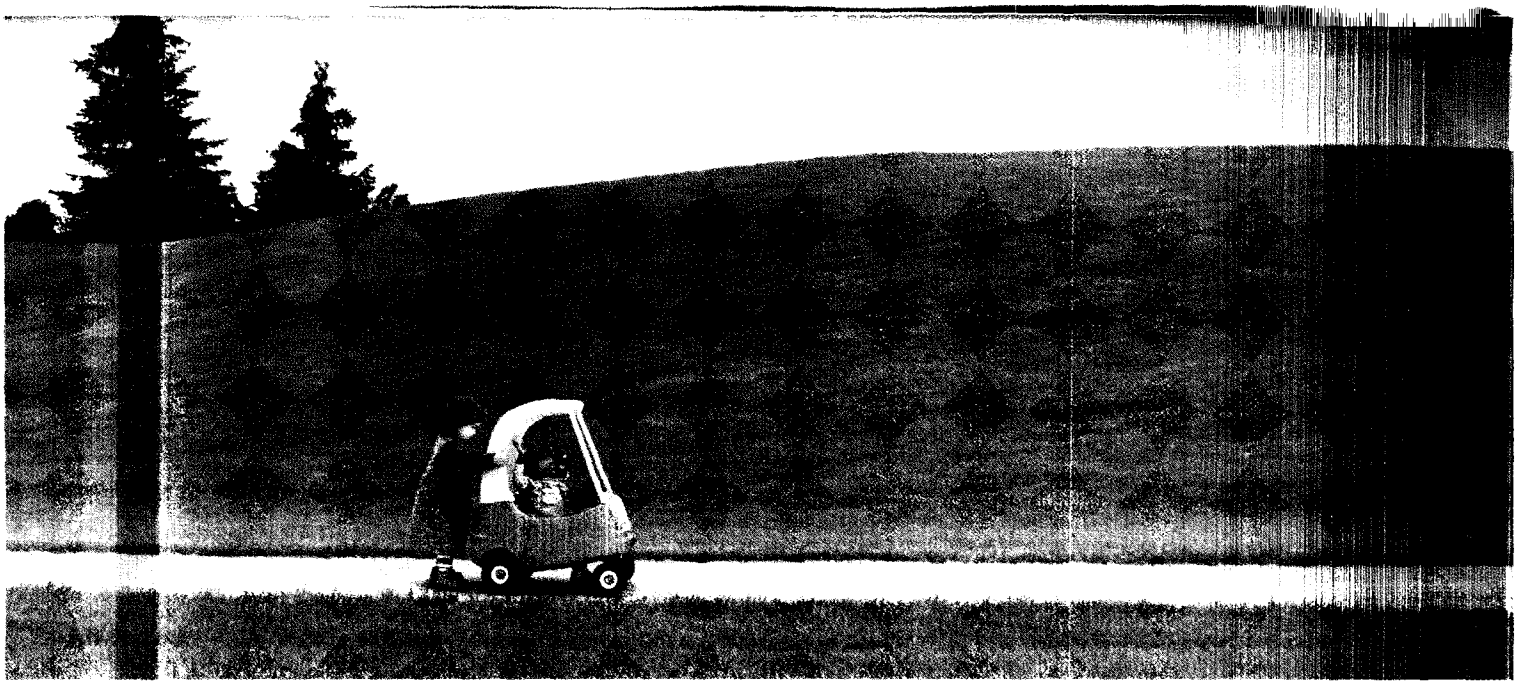

WHO'S DRIVING THE HYDROGEN ECONOMY?

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF GM.

The hydrogen economy isn't a pipe dream. And it isn't the buzz du jour on the front page of the business section. The hydrogen economy is the endgame of a multi-faceted strategy GM set in motion years ago, with steps that are real, progressive, and well-underway.

Internal combustion engine. GM has always been, and will continue to be, one of the leaders in fuel economy and emissions technology. Five cylinders delivering the power of six. Six delivering the power of eight. Smarter systems available in millions of GM vehicles right now. In fact, GM has more car and truck segment fuel economy leaders than any other manufacturer.*

Hybrids. Powered partly by engines, partly by batteries, hybrids deliver improved fuel economy with uncompromising performance. Last year we announced an aggressive plan to take some of our most popular models and offer hybrid versions of them. Cars, trucks, SUVs and buses you already know and trust, with an extra boost at the fuel pump.

Hydrogen. The destination is the hydrogen economy. A generation of cars and trucks powered by hydrogen, where the only emission is water vapor. GM introduced the first fuel cell-powered concept vehicle nearly forty years ago. And we've continued to push fuel cells forward ever since. Right now, a test fleet of GM fuel cell vehicles is negotiating traffic in downtown Tokyo and Washington, D.C. Right now, GM has over five hundred engineers on three different continents working on hydrogen solutions.

We're making sure children today are in cleaner cars tomorrow. And in the driver's seat of the hydrogen economy.

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*Based on Ward's segmentation and 2004 model year EPA estimated mpg city and highway leaders.

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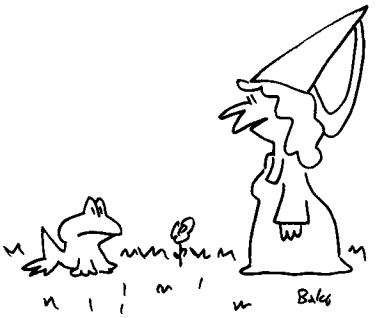

"Kiss you? Let's have dinner and a movie first, and then we'll see."

■ In *The Hotline*'s survey of state polls, President **Bush** leads in 26 states worth 218 electoral votes and **John Kerry** leads in 18 states worth 221 electoral votes (270 needed to win). . . . ABC News/*Washington Post* poll: Bush 50 percent, Kerry 47 percent, **Ralph Nader** 1 percent. . . . Bush, in third debate: "A plan is not a litany of complaints, and a plan is not to lay out programs that you can't pay for." . . . "Only a liberal senator from Massachusetts would say that a 49 percent increase in funding for education was not enough." . . . "In all due respect, I'm not so sure it's credible to quote leading news organizations about—oh, never mind." . . . Bush at Arizona rally: "Someday an American president will be sitting down with a leader from Iraq, elected by the people, talking about how to keep the peace in a troubled part of the world, talking about how to spread liberty to corners of the world that need liberty, talking about how to make sure the example of a free society shines brightly for all. And our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it."

■ Kerry on whether 9/11 changed him, in *New York Times*: "It didn't change me much at all." . . . More Kerry: "We have to get back to the place we were, where terrorists are not the focus of our lives, but they're a nuisance." . . . Bush on Kerry's "nuisance" comment: "I couldn't disagree more. Our goal is not to reduce terror to some acceptable level of nuisance. Our goal is to defeat terror by staying on the offensive, destroying terrorist networks, and spreading freedom and liberty around the world." . . . Former governor **Bill Weld** (R., Mass.), in *Wall Street Journal*: "My own view is that the antiwar John Kerry is the real John Kerry, and that what Sen. Kerry is now saying is what he believes." . . . Kerry campaign manager **Mary Beth Cahill** on **Mary Cheney**'s lesbianism: "Fair game." . . . **Lynne Cheney** on Kerry's remarks about her daughter: "This is not a good man. What a cheap and tawdry political trick."

■ **John Edwards**, in vice-presidential debate: "The president said that he would unite this country, that he was a uniter, not a divider. Have you ever seen America more divided? Have you ever seen Washington more divided?" . . . Edwards, next day: "If you live in the United States of America and you vote for George Bush, you've lost your mind." . . . More Edwards: "We do have too many lawsuits." . . . Bonus Edwards: "When John Kerry is president, people like **Christopher Reeve** will get up out of that wheelchair and walk again." . . . Actor **Michael J. Fox** appears in separate ads for Kerry and Sen. **Arlen Specter** (R., Pa.).

■ Senate races come down to wire. . . . In Colorado, **Ken Salazar** (D.) holds slight lead over **Pete Coors** (R.), according to recent polls, but GOP remains hopeful for win. . . . In North Carolina, Rep. **Richard Burr** (R.) closes gap and runs even with **Erskine Bowles** (D.). . . . In South Carolina, Rep. **Jim DeMint** (R.) looks ready to defeat **Inez Tenenbaum** (D.). . . . Dead heats in Alaska, Florida, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. . . . Sen. **George Allen** (R., Va.): "When **John Thune** wins in South Dakota [against **Tom Daschle**], that's like picking up three seats in itself." . . . Control of Senate may hinge on Louisiana runoff scheduled for Dec. 4. . . . Gov. **Bill Owens** (R., Colo.) on voter drives sponsored by liberal organizations, in *Washington Times*: "I'm very concerned that such groups have registered people who are not qualified to vote."

■ Gov. **Jeb Bush** (R., Fla.), on ABC News: "I'm not going to run for president in 2008." . . . Sen. **Mark Dayton** (D., Minn.) closes Capitol Hill office, citing national-security threats. . . . Rep. **Peter King** (R., N.Y.) on Dayton, in *Newsday*: "To me either he's paranoid or he just wants his people back home working the election." . . . Former New York mayor **Ed Koch** (D.) stumps for Bush: "The French, you can't ever count on them. They are living in the days when they ruled the world and they don't like this upstart United States." . . . Sen. **Joe Lieberman** (D., Conn.) on Bush, in *Palm Beach Post*: "We are dealing with a president who's had a record of strong, consistent support for Israel. You can't say otherwise."

■ Post Office announces that **Ronald Reagan** will appear on stamp early next year. . . . Survey of high-school students, by National Research Center for College and University Admissions: 82 percent say it's not fair to use race or ethnicity as admissions factor and 56 percent think "adults overemphasize the importance of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity."

■ Polish president **Aleksander Kwasniewski**: "It is really sad that a senator with 20 years of experience does not notice the Polish input into the coalition and the Polish sacrifice. It is immoral." . . . Spain's socialist government disinvites American troops from participating in parade honoring **Columbus** and replaces them with French soldiers. . . . As gangs loyal to former president **Jean-Bertrand Aristide** murder dozens in Haiti, Aristide and wife become "research fellows" at University of South Africa. . . . **Saddam Hussein** tells interrogator that **Ernest Hemingway**'s *The Old Man and the Sea* is one of his favorite books.

■ **Jay Leno**: "Besides being Columbus Day, today is also Indigenous Peoples Day, celebrating Native Americans. Today, John Kerry told the Native Americans he has a plan for withdrawing all the troops from America, but it's a secret plan." **NR**

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Kids today are part of the most energy-intensive generation in history. They demand lots of electricity. And they deserve clean air.

That's why nuclear energy is so important to America's energy future. Nuclear energy already produces electricity for 1 of every 5 homes and businesses. And our 103 nuclear power plants are emission free so they help keep the air clean.

We need secure, domestic sources of electricity for the 21st Century—and we also need clean air. With nuclear energy, we can have both.

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THE WEEK

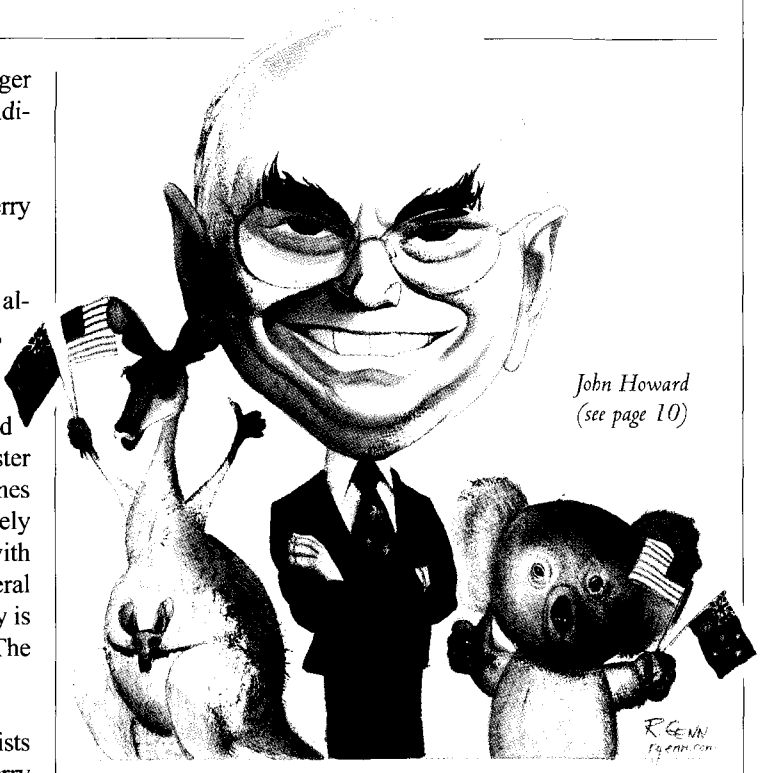
■ Talk about dirty campaigning! Kerry's campaign manager declares Mary Cheney "fair game" and within days the candidate takes out a hunting license.

■ Matt Damon has said he'd pay a million dollars to get Kerry elected. He can save his money—Teresa's got a billion.

■ There is fitful progress in Iraq. Radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr has made noises about joining the political process, and his forces have begun to sell heavy weapons to the Iraqi government in a "gun buy-back" program. Al-Sadr will probably change tack again, but at least Sadr City in Baghdad is relatively peaceful. Farther north in Fallujah, Prime Minister Allawi is threatening an all-out assault and the U.S. Marines have made probing attacks. Any battle for Fallujah will surely be as uneven—with negotiations constantly alternating with combat—as the (ultimately successful) fight for Najaf several weeks ago. But prevailing there is imperative, since the city is the main exporter of car bombs to the rest of the country. The sooner, the better.

■ "We have to get back to the place we were, where terrorists are not the focus of our lives, but they're a nuisance," John Kerry told *The New York Times Magazine*. "As a former law-enforcement person, I know we're never going to end prostitution. We're never going to end illegal gambling. But we're going to reduce it, organized crime, to a level where it isn't on the rise. It isn't threatening people's lives every day, and fundamentally, it's something that you continue to fight, but it's not threatening the fabric of your life." Kerry's Republican critics have seized on the word "nuisance," with Bush arguing that terrorism could not be reduced "to some acceptable level of nuisance." Others have criticized Kerry's analogies, and quite rightly: Given that "escort services" advertise in most cities' yellow pages, the analogies are not hopeful ones. But the most revealing phrase in Kerry's remark may have been his opening words: *We have to get back to the place we were*. In the 1990s, we may not have felt we had to pay much attention to terrorists. But they were paying attention to us. If we go back to a September 10 mindset, we almost guarantee repetition of September 11.

■ If you relied exclusively on the mainstream media for the news, you'd surely believe that the war in Iraq was a distraction from the War on Terror. You would probably think the 9/11 Commission found no evidence of ties between Saddam's Iraq and al-Qaeda. And you wouldn't have heard about new evidence, uncovered largely by the Iraq Survey Group, of Saddam's longtime support for other terrorist outfits. It turns out, for example, that the dictator used the U.N.'s scandal-ridden Oil-for-Food program to give 2 million barrels of oil to a Syrian company fronting for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the



John Howard
(see page 10)

ROMAN GENN

group responsible for the 1970 "black September" hijackings and other lovely acts. Saddam's Iraq also appears to have had an active relationship with the Egyptian Islamic Group, led by "blind sheikh" Omar Abdel Rahman (now in prison for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing), and links to an important ally of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. The regime even had a hand in training terrorists—Iraqi, Palestinian, Yemeni, Saudi, Lebanese, Egyptian, and Sudanese—in its own Salman Pak training camp. But you're unlikely to learn any of this from the establishment media, since such facts only vindicate the president's decision to go to war. The Bush administration should be spreading the word—time is running out.

■ Eighteen reservists from the 343rd Quartermaster Company refused to convoy supplies over a 150-mile route in central Iraq, saying that their trucks were a) old and b) without armored escorts. The army is investigating their disobedience, and the state of the trucks. The *New York Times* slapped it on Page One ("Soldiers Saw Refusing Order as Their Last Stand"), counting on their readers not to know that this, or worse, happens in every war, including the war in which we were occupied. When the New Jersey line mutinied in January 1781, George Washington told the officer he dispatched to the scene to "instantly execute a few of the most active and most incendiary leaders." The malcontents in the 343rd Quartermaster Company should count their blessings.

■ In all the debates, John Kerry criticized Bush for allowing

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CAMPAIGN 2004/*The Presidency*

Public races to get dollars by deadline

The rush to get them at Face Value may predict our next president

By Laura Fisher
Universal Media Syndicate

Citizens across the nation are jamming National Hot Line phones in an effort to get the new Campaign Dollars for their favorite candidate.

So far, George W. Bush is ahead in the first round of a very tight race to get the special Dollar Bills.

And right now, they are the hottest items around.

They are the 2004 Presidential Campaign Dollar Bills, featuring candidates George W. Bush and John F. Kerry. And everyone is trying to get their hands on one.

The highly collectible 2004 Campaign Dollars are made with genuine U.S. legal tender Bills. A detailed custom portrait of the candidate is applied by the Monetary Exchange to create this campaign collectible. "So, anyone who spends these special historic treasures would be foolish," explains John T. White, Executive Director of the U.S. Monetary Exchange. "The potential historic value of these collector's items could be so much more."

FIRST TABULATION

RESULTS OF THE FIRST PUBLIC RELEASE:

✓**BUSH 53.1%**
KERRY 46.9%

At first, it looked like those who missed the first Public Offering would be left out. That's because all the Bills in the U. S. Monetary Exchange's first release sold out almost immediately.

But, it has been confirmed that a controlled second release is being issued to the general public, and we will tell you how you can get yours.

The hard to find Bills could be difficult to come by. Dealers may try to grab them up on speculation that they could produce a huge windfall for their children or grandchildren. No one knows exactly what they will be worth someday because collectibles always fluctuate. But, if parents or grandparents had saved a Teddy Roosevelt campaign button, it could now list for up to $3,000.00.

"It's no wonder people are trying to get these popular Bills when you look at the current market for historic treasures from past elections. A vintage Presidential Currency collection recently listed for $5,750.00 on a popular online auction, and a Ronald Reagan Inaugural Medallion was listed at $3,295.00," White said.

The smartest collectors are setting aside their political preferences to get the Bills for both candidates, so they can have the complete Presidential Election set for 2004.

"Complete collections are always the most desirable. Just imagine how much more a matched set of 1860 Lincoln-Douglas campaign posters would be worth today."

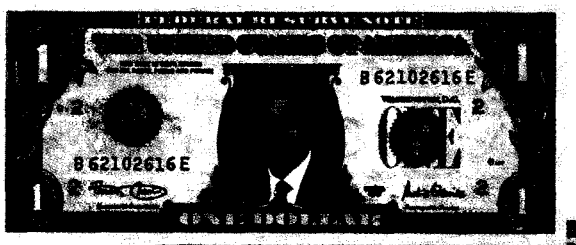
"Savvy collectors also know that items for losing candidates can become valuable. A newspaper with the famous 'Dewey Wins' headline from the 1948 campaign is now worth up to $800.00," said White. "Most everyone wants a complete set with both candidates, and they want extras to give as gifts to the children and grandchildren."

To discourage hoarding, dealers must submit requests in writing for 10 or more banded packs of 5 Bills. But, the general public can get what they need by calling the National Direct Hotline at **1-800-755-4998** now and asking for **Dept. BK876** "Limits for dealers will be strictly enforced," White said.

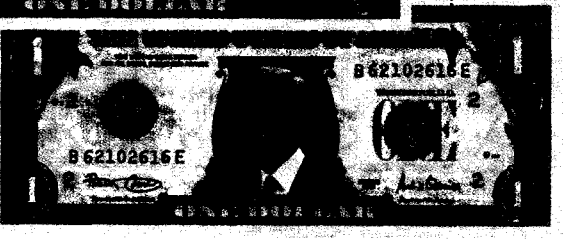
How to get them

The U.S. Monetary Exchange is releasing the popular 2004 Presidential Campaign Dollar Bills to the general public. Call the **National Direct Hotline 1-800-755-4998, ask for Dept BK876.** The standard $9 processing fee plus shipping gets you a banded five-pack of the vault fresh, crisp new U.S. legal tender Campaign Dollars at face value. Satisfaction is guaranteed.

HISTORIC VALUE: If grandparents had saved a Teddy Roosevelt Campaign Button, it could list for $3,000.00 today.



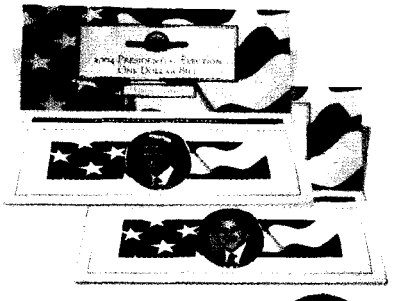
LEGAL TENDER: They are made with real U.S. legal tender Bills. The Monetary Exchange then applies a detailed custom portrait of each candidate.



How much are they listed for today?

Values of collectibles fluctuate and there are never any guarantees, but just look at how much these past historic presidential items are listed for today.

Historic Election Item	*Today's List*
Vintage U.S. Currency Presidents Collection	*$5,750.00*
Truman "60 Million People Working" Button	*$1,630.99*
Teddy Roosevelt Campaign Button	*$3,000.00*
1912 Democratic Convention Emblem	*$2,499.00*
Truman/Dewey "Dewey Wins" Newspaper	*$800.00*
Vintage Collection of Campaign Buttons	*$1,999.99*
Ronald Reagan Inaugural Medallion	*$3,295.00*
1976 Carter Peanut Handle Campaign Cane	*$450.00*



■ **GIFT:** The first 10,000 people even get these special patriotic red, white and blue 2004 Presidential Election Protective Display Wallets for each Dollar Bill.

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THE WEEK...

Osama bin Laden to escape at the battle of Tora Bora in December 2001 by relying on unreliable local proxy forces. There is a pinch of truth to this charge—the locals on the ground entered into constant negotiations with the Taliban and al-Qaeda remnants that may have allowed more of them to escape than would have otherwise. But there is no guarantee that bin Laden was present at Tora Bora. The reliance on local forces was part of a strategic choice Kerry supported at the time—to avoid a mass infusion of U.S. forces that might cause a nationalist backlash in Afghanistan. Even if the U.S. had wanted to send thousands of troops into the impossible terrain of the White Mountains, it is doubtful that they could have been deployed in time to make a difference. So this Kerry line-of-attack is exaggerated enough to qualify as a cheap shot, which makes it all the more disappointing that Bush never uttered a peep in response.

■ One of the too-good-to-check stories of American politics is that George Smathers beat Claude Pepper in a Florida Senate race by telling audiences that Pepper's sister was a "thespian." Did John Kerry try a similar ploy in the third presidential debate? There, as all the world now knows, Kerry said, "We're all God's children . . . and I think if you were to talk to Dick Cheney's daughter, who is a lesbian, she would tell you that she's being who she was." Everyone who follows these things knows that Mary Cheney is gay, but was Kerry outing her for the millions who don't follow these things, in the hope of prying off marginal Bush voters? (All Bush voters, he would assume, are bigots.) Or was he trying to highlight the "hypocrisy" of Republicans who love gay friends and family members while opposing gay marriage (as if the only way to express love were to endorse the gay agenda du jour)? Whatever his intentions, he was intrusive, as was John Edwards, his running mate, who focused on Mary Cheney in the vice-presidential debate, and as was Mary Beth Cahill, his campaign manager, who described her as "fair game." Bob Dole didn't discuss Al Gore's kids. One of the things that put one off the Kerry crowd is the suspicion that they think the personal is the political, and that therefore anything goes.

■ How do I disdain thee? Let me count the ways. Ron Suskind rolled out a new attack on George W. Bush in a cover story for *The New York Times Magazine*, entitled "Without a Doubt." Suskind puts the payoff up front, in a quotation from conservative columnist Bruce Bartlett: "[Bush has] this sort of weird, Messianic idea of what he thinks God has told him to do. This is why George W. Bush is so clear-eyed about Al Qaeda and the Islamic fundamentalist enemy. . . . He understands them, because he's just like them." That is a stunningly stupid thing to say. What does it, and the rest of Suskind's jeremiad, tell us about Bush? Something, as a matter of fact. Bush is an aggressive man, possessed of deep convictions. We have seen his like in the White House before: Harry Truman, Andrew Jackson (Bush has a piety that Truman and Jackson lacked). Sometimes the voters like such scrappers; almost always, the elite, from Nicholas Biddle to Ron Suskind, doesn't. Self-assurance does not guarantee wisdom. Bush has made mistakes, even as Truman and Jackson did. But history judged them positively, even as (if present trends continue) it will judge Bush. Suskind's comprehensive diss, by trying to prove too much, proves nothing.

■ John Kerry told the *Des Moines Register* that should President Bush win a second term there is "a great potential for a draft." Neither Bush nor the military wants a draft. But liberals have been hyping this fiction in the hope of swaying younger voters and their nervous parents and grandparents. A bill to reinstate the draft was introduced by anti-war liberals, only to be voted down in the House 402 to 2. The majority included Rep. Charles Rangel (D., N.Y.), the bill's chief sponsor, who has explained that he introduced it to protest the war in Iraq—and to complain about the "overrepresentation" of the black, Hispanic, and poor among our soldiers serving there. He can be proud that his pet idea has gone from a cheap anti-war polemic to a dirty campaign trick in such a short span of time. This draft is as imaginary as Kerry's scruples.

■ Christopher Reeve, Superman from the movies, is dead. After a riding accident in 1995, he put up a valiant fight to overcome his paralysis and to find a cure for spinal-cord injuries. After he died, John Edwards said, "If we do the work that we can do in this country, the work that we will do when John Kerry is president, people like Christopher Reeve are going to walk, get up out of that wheelchair and walk again." Edwards's reference was to federally funded embryonic-stem-cell research, a cause dear to Reeve. The candidate's gross promise cannot be said to have misused Reeve, who was prone to the same type of overstatement in promoting the research. "The cure is just around the corner," he said. We have no reason to think that it is, although we can always hope. And while we do not agree with the means Reeve wanted to employ in the search for a cure—the destruction of early-stage human beings—we can laud the good he did in his too-brief life.

■ Kerry went out of his way to invoke Ronald Reagan in the debates. Good. We're always happy to see anyone give the Gipper his due. But Kerry's fondness for Reagan was clearly opportunistic. During the Democratic primaries he went out of his way to attack Reagan's "illegal" war in Latin America. And Kerry distorted Reagan's foreign-policy accomplishments, suggesting that the thrust of Reagan's approach was building alliances when it was really rebuilding the American military to confront the Soviets from a position of strength.

20 YEARS, 5 BILLS

At last, like wooden stakes impaled
In dreaded Dracula, George nailed
John's desultory Senate years:
There were no noticeable cheers
Or clapping—all forbidden; though
Later, on Fox, the afterglow
Among the talking heads suggested
The awful act had been digested.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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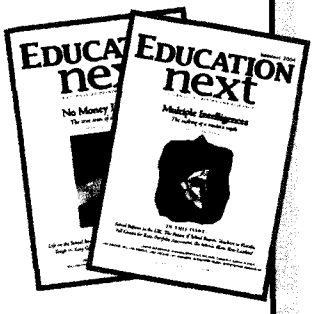
The Qualified Teacher Charade

INTERESTED IN CUTTING-EDGE IDEAS ABOUT K–12 EDUCATION?



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Education Next: A Journal of Opinion and Research

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No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is best known as a landmark—and controversial—effort by the federal government to hold public schools accountable for their performance by means of standards and tests. It is also a landmark in another, less publicized sense: it requires that all academic courses in every public school be taught by "highly qualified" teachers. This teacher requirement is unprecedented, and it has great promise.

There is a fly in the ointment, however—a problem in the way NCLB is currently written and executed that undermines its own efforts to improve teacher quality. This is a problem that our political leaders are ignoring. They shouldn't be.

On the surface, NCLB's approach makes sense. It mandates that to be highly qualified a teacher must not only have a bachelor's degree and be certified, which the states already require, but also demonstrate competence in the subject being taught. This is the great innovation of the act—it requires competence.

For new teachers, competence can be demonstrated by having a college major in the relevant subject or by taking a rigorous test of knowledge. Veteran teachers can demonstrate competence in these same ways. Or they can do it by meeting a "high, objective, uniform state standard of evaluation" (HOUSSE), which the states are allowed to devise on their own.

Herein lies the problem. **The HOUSSE provisions create a loophole big enough to drive three million veteran teachers through—and the states have incentives to do just that.** They are under intense political pressure, especially from teachers unions, to protect the interests of veteran teachers and to ensure that no one loses a job. It is no accident that bad teachers have long been virtually impossible to remove from the classroom. And it is no accident that most states are now designing their HOUSSE standards to ensure that every veteran teacher can meet them, regardless of their true competence.

How do the states pull off this charade? By stipulating that their veteran teachers are not required to take substantive tests or have the relevant college majors, but can instead gain highly qualified status through some combination of teaching experience, classes in professional development, self-compiled portfolios, supervisor evaluations, and other factors that can easily produce positive outcomes for every teacher.

In Arkansas, for example, teachers with five years' experience automatically satisfy the HOUSSE standard and become "highly qualified." In Ohio and Massachusetts, teachers can meet the standard by simply racking up enough hours in professional development courses. In New Hampshire, teachers can do it by engaging in a "self-assessment" with a supervisor and "partner." And so it goes, for virtually every state—making a mockery of the law and ensuring that incompetent and mediocre teachers will not be weeded out.

This is a national travesty. The solution is for Congress to modify NCLB by eliminating the HOUSSE option, and requiring that all veteran teachers either have a college major in their subject area or pass a rigorous test of substantive competence. **The purpose of our public school system is to see that our children are receiving a quality education, not to protect the jobs of the adults who are hired to teach them.** Especially if they can't demonstrate that they are knowledgeable enough to do so.

—Terry M. Moe

Terry M. Moe is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, a member of the Institution's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education, and a professor of political science at Stanford University.

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THE WEEK...

Senator, we knew Ronald Reagan . . .

■ Our vaccine-makers need a shot in the arm. The industry is highly regulated; the regulators prefer tried and true methods (injecting chicken eggs) that are costly; and the government has lowered profit margins by buying pediatric vaccines (thank you, Mrs. Clinton). As a result, only two companies make flu vaccine for the American market, and one of those is sidelined this year, because of contamination issues. Hence the present shortage. Hang your garlic and your black-cat bones; Teresa Kerry recommends white raisins soaked in gin for arthritis, maybe that will help. Meanwhile, we know what to look forward to if the feds ever move to take over the drug companies.

■ Democrats, outraged that Sinclair Broadcasting is airing parts of the anti-Kerry documentary *Stolen Honor: Wounds That Never Heal*, are demanding equal time. They don't get it: The broadcast *is* equal time. Thirty years ago, Kerry's Vietnam Veterans Against the War basked in the media spotlight while the cries of 700 POWs then in captivity went unheard. More recently, most journalists have decided that the only Vietnam veterans whose opinions matter are the handful who vouch for Kerry's heroism. Now some of the veterans who endured both years of abuse and John Kerry's slanders are finally having their say. The 42-minute film relates the POWs' conviction that anti-war protesters prolonged their ordeal by encouraging their captors to believe that the Vietnam War "would be lost in the streets of America." One of the two Medal of Honor winners who appear declares that he will "never forget" the role the senator played in blackening the reputation of Vietnam veterans. Kerry declined an invitation to comment. Democrats have tried to spike the film, filing complaints with the FEC and the FCC. The critics haven't shown the documentary to be inaccurate, and the First Amendment protects it in any case. As for their complaint that a "blatantly partisan attack" is masquerading as "news programming": We know the feeling.

■ The next time you hear Kerry whining about Republican "scare tactics," remember Spokane, Wash. There, on Oct. 11, Bush-Cheney campaign headquarters were broken into; a hole was kicked through the wall of an adjacent office, and cash was stolen. On Oct. 1, three laptops with confidential campaign information were purloined from a Bellevue, Wash., Bush-Cheney office. Gunshots pierced campaign headquarters in Knoxville, Tenn.; bullets from another drive-by, in Huntington, W. Va., narrowly missed staffers gathered to watch the president's Sept. 2 convention speech. The AFL-CIO has orchestrated invasion-and-intimidation missions against several Bush-Cheney offices in Florida—where three elderly volunteers were overwhelmed by some three dozen "protesters" in Tampa, and where an Orlando campaign worker had his wrist fractured by labor-union goon squads, who slammed another staffer's head into a glass door. Anti-Republican vandalism is ubiquitous: In Madison, Wis., a Bush supporter had a swastika burned into his lawn with weed killer. Lawn signs have been stolen or defaced almost everywhere, and cars sporting Bush-Cheney stickers are prime targets for attack. Unsurprisingly, there has been little outrage from the mainstream media, and almost no contrition from the perpetrators. There is, however, perspicacity from Internet T-shirt vendors: For $19.95, you can boast that "A person of tolerance and diversity keyed my car."

■ Republicans are crude, insensitive, and intolerant? *They're* not the ones making fun of the handicapped for political gain. In Tennessee, a flier emerging from Democratic representative Craig Fitzhugh's campaign office mocks Bush supporters—and Special Olympians. It features a photograph of a boy finishing a track race; superimposed over the runner's face is President Bush's own visage; across the top stretches the teaser, "Voting for Bush is like running in the Special Olympics," with the punch line at the bottom: "Even if you win, you're still retarded." The nastiness of such material needs no explanation; that using it in a campaign is politically suicidal should be similarly self-evident. Or should it? The flier has garnered scarcely a nod from big media, and Democrats seem to be enjoying some success in claiming that this is all a Republican dirty trick. The story falls into the bulging category of, Can you imagine if *we* did this?

■ The final result of the vote in Afghanistan won't be known for some time, though it looks as if Hamid Karzai has beaten off 16 contenders and will be elected president by a good majority. The holding of this election is astonishing. Democracy has arrived in a country where the concept itself has always been unknown, and people have habitually defined themselves according to ethnicity, tribe, and religion. The Taliban was expected to paralyze the election with violence. The warlords were supposed to intimidate voters. Women, it was feared, wouldn't dare leave home. All the grim predictions were wrong. The Afghans have proven quick learners. Over 10 million registered to vote, and the turnout was impressive, women included. Some accusations of irregularities have surfaced, but the thousands of Afghan and foreign observers and supervisors dismiss these as too trivial to falsify the outcome. Afghans are telling reporters how proud and happy they feel to be choosing a leader in a free and democratic process overriding the old identities of ethnicity, tribe, and religion. Karzai himself emphasizes how proud he is of the people. Our country can also be proud of its role in replacing the rule of the gun with the rule of law.

■ You wouldn't know it from reading the *New York Times*, which buried the story on page 16, but Australia had an election and—guess what?—the conservative guy who backs Bush and the Iraq war won! We can't help suspecting that the *Times* might, just might, have played the news on the front page had John Howard lost to his Labour challenger (hotly anti-American), Mark Latham. "Bush Loses Another Ally," "Bush's Coalition Stumbles," "Australians, Tired of Death, Vote For Peace"—ah, the great headlines that never were. As it is, however, Howard becomes only the third prime minister in

EDITOR'S NOTE: The next issue of NATIONAL REVIEW will appear in three weeks.

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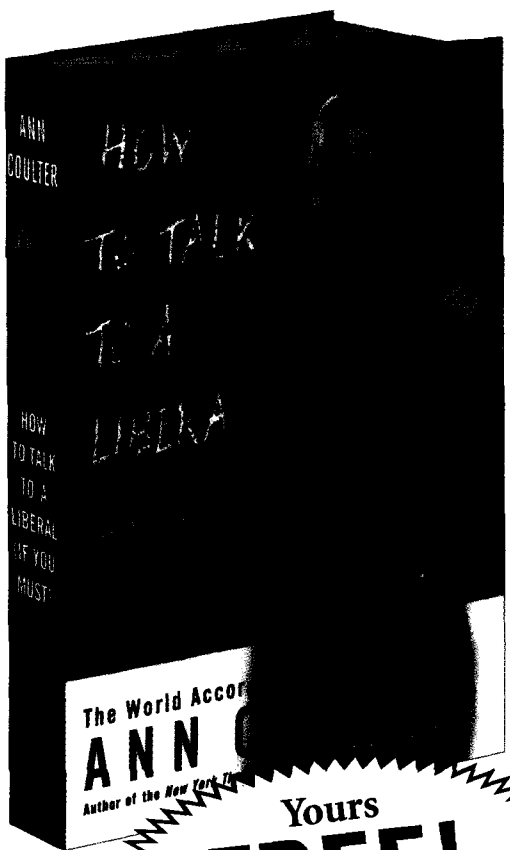
ANN COULTER: UNCENSORED UNCUT



She's the author of three *New York Times* bestsellers: *Slander, Treason,* and *High Crimes and Misdemeanors*. She's the most high-profile and controversial conservative intellectual on the scene today. Yet most publications find her too hot to handle. Her syndicated column, although brimming with her trademark wit and incisive political observations, appears in only a handful of papers. But now, in ***How to Talk to a Liberal (If You Must)***, Coulter collects the best of those columns, including some that no one dared to print before.

In this book, Coulter explains, are "bootlegs, never-released versions, NC-17 versions, lost classics, remixes, extended-play versions, and the director's cut columns." She has included here "columns too hot to be published until now — along with the editors' rejections. These columns, as well as any columns that caused more than the usual ruckus (like my 9/11 'kill their leaders' column) I preserved in their original form — so you can see what the fuss was about. Some columns I added a little to and some I added so much to that they grew from short columns to entire chapters (e.g., the Elián González and Confederate flag chapters). Even the unretouched columns are *my* unretouched columns, as they live on my computer — which was not always the same as the published version."

Here, then, is the unexpurgated Ann Coulter, unrestrained by cowering editors and politically correct publishers. ***How to Talk to a Liberal (If You Must)*** includes Coulter's unvarnished take on everything from John Kerry to the essence of being a liberal ("The absolute conviction that there is one set of rules for you, and another, completely different set of rules for everyone else"), from the media's war on guns to America's war on terrorism ("I am often asked if I still think we should invade their countries, kill their leaders, and convert them to Christianity. The answer is: Now more than ever"), from the outrageous bias of the *New York Times* to the self-serving bloat of Bill Clinton's memoirs.

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THE WEEK...

Australian history to gain a fourth term. Congratulations to him, advance Australia fair, and kudos to a country that plays a crucial role in the Anglosphere.

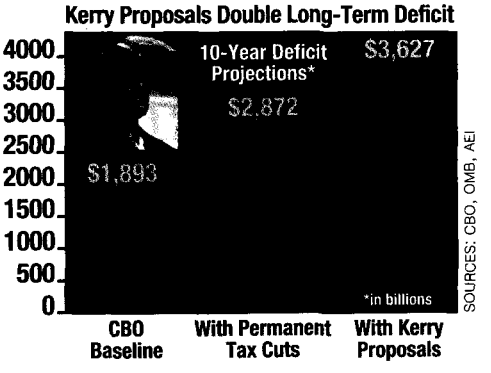
■ Babi Yar . . . Katyn Forest . . . the "killing fields" of Communist Cambodia . . . Mass graves, filled with the corpses of unarmed people, executed en masse by despotic regimes, have been one of the most horrible features of our age of horrors. The mass graves of Iraq are now being located and excavated, so that evidence can be gathered for the trials of Saddam Hussein and his colleagues in tyranny. One site dating from the late 1980s, south of Mosul, has already yielded 120 bodies, all of Kurdish women and children, killed by small-arms fire and then bulldozed into a pit. Some of the women were pregnant. Some of the children were clutching toys. The site represents a tiny fraction of about 300,000 unarmed civilians murdered by Saddam Hussein's regime. One illuminating footnote here: The forensic experts brought in to work on this site are currently all American and British. Most Europeans have refused to assist in the operation after Iyad Allawi's interim Iraqi government said that it would consider the death penalty for former regime members convicted of war crimes. Such fine sensibilities our European friends have!

■ The European Union has, *naturellement*, a Justice and Home Affairs Council, and that council needs a commissioner to represent it in the EU Commission. Got that? Well, Italy's nominee for the post of commissioner was turned down after, in confirmation hearings, he told the council that he considered homosexuality a sin. The nominee, Signor Rocco Buttiglione (stop that giggling in the back row, please), who is close to the Vatican, averred that he would defend the rights of homosexuals according to European law. It is still open to the commission to accept

The Outspender

THIS may be the first presidential election in American history in which both major candidates suffer from severe fiscal dementia. Bush's record on controlling federal spending has been woeful, as has been pointed out in these pages time and again. One of John Kerry's best zingers during the three debates was when he quipped, "Being lectured by the president on fiscal responsibility is a little bit like Tony Soprano talking to me about law and order."

It would be easy for Kerry to pivot to Bush's right on the issue of restoring fiscal sanity to Washington. But alas, the Massachusetts senator's record is even worse. In every year he has been in the Senate, Kerry has been rated an enemy of the taxpayer by the National Taxpayers Union; in his last twelve years, his grades from NTU were eleven Fs and one D. Last year alone, he sponsored $205 billion in new federal spending. The only programs he has ever wanted to cut have been those related to national security—e.g., the missile-defense system.



As president, Kerry would supersize the budgets of the very programs that are driving the federal government into bankruptcy. For each of the past five years, Medicare and Medicaid have grown by more than 50 percent. The director of the General Accounting Office recently warned that if health care and pension costs are not contained soon, within two decades the federal government will have to devote every penny it collects to sending out retirement checks to the elderly and paying for nursing-home costs, doctors, and hospital services.

On Social Security, Kerry proposes to do nothing, which amounts to ordering the *Titanic* to keep heading directly to the iceberg. Bush wants to steer clear by creating private accounts, which would dramatically reduce the future obligations of the program and thus cut the $8 trillion in unfunded liability over the next 30 years.

Kerry has two terrible ideas about health care. First, he wants to make Medicaid available to all workers with an income of three times the poverty level or less. Of course, that would soon be four times the poverty level, then five times . . . This would encourage private employers to drop health coverage for their workers, because the government would provide the insurance essentially "for free." Second, Kerry wants to make 55-year-olds eligible for Medicare. But Medicare already faces a $10 trillion unfunded liability; almost every sound fiscal analyst believes we should be *raising* the eligibility age, not lowering it.

Throw in the senator's plans for fattening other social-welfare programs—funding for urban schools, subsidies for college-tuition costs, universal child-care subsidies, a national service program—and the ten-year cost is estimated at $2 trillion, according to John Berthoud of the NTU. The accompanying chart shows that Kerry's spending plans would double the national debt over the next decade.

Further bad news about Kerry is that his tax hike for the rich (those families with an income of more than $200,000) would cover the cost of only about 10 percent of his spending binge. So where would the money come from? I calculate that if Kerry pulled a Bill Clinton and proposed a massive broad-based tax hike to close the budget gap, the average family would be forced to pay about $8,000 in higher taxes over the next decade to pay for all the Hershey's kisses Kerry wants to hand out.

Kerry says he has a plan to reduce the federal budget deficit by half over the next four years. To borrow a line from his running mate, John Edwards, "He's not being straight with the American people."

—STEPHEN MOORE

JUSTIN LANE/EPA

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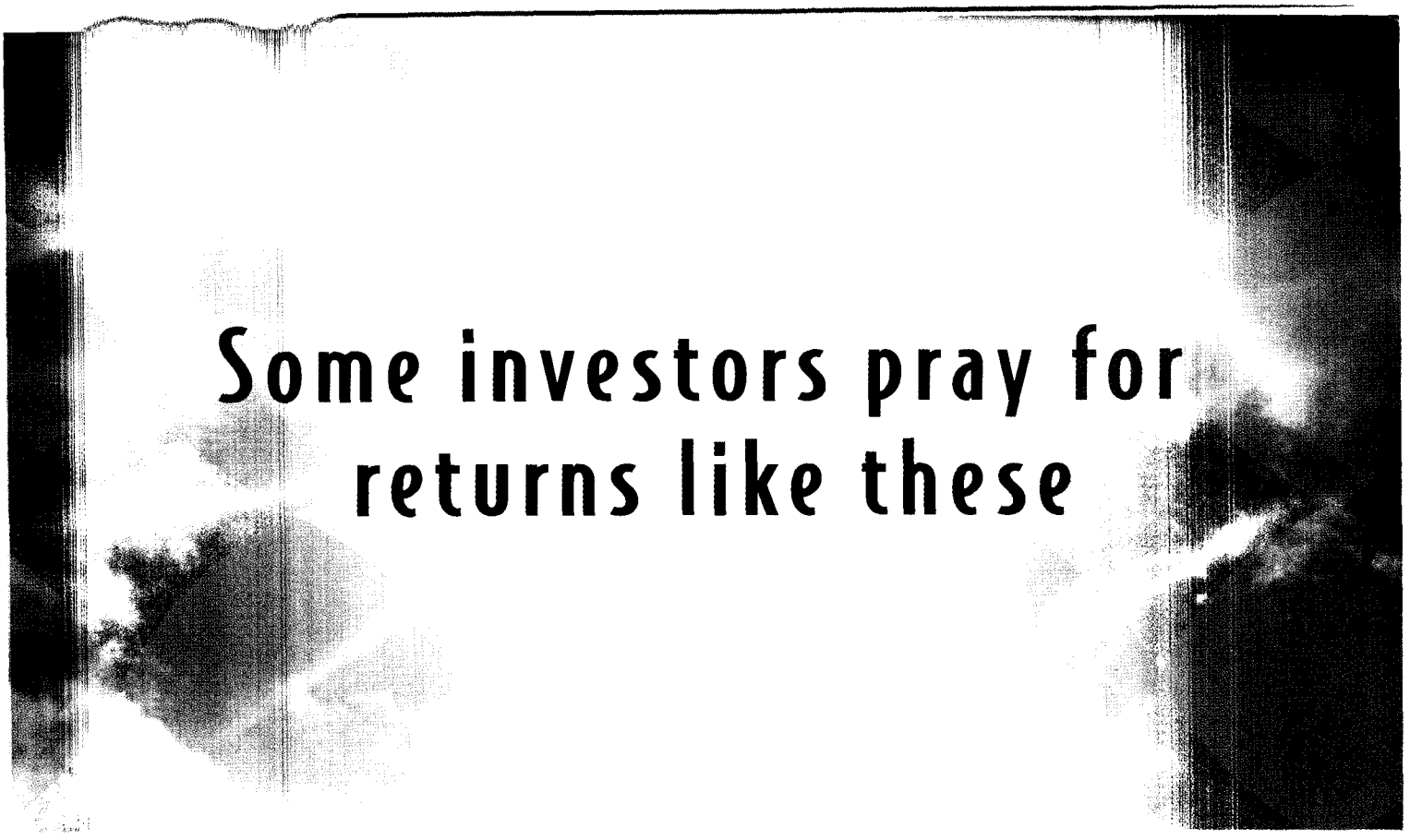

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THE WEEK...

Sgr. Buttiglione as a commissioner in the teeth of the council's rejection, and they may well do so in order to avoid embarrassing the Italian government. We hope they do; and we hope Sgr. Buttiglione serves long and honorably doing whatever it is that an EU Commission commissioner does.

■ After intense negotiations, the Senate has unanimously passed the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004. The bill provides support to non-governmental groups aiding North Koreans; demands that the U.N. confront China regarding its policy of repatriating North Korean refugees (a violation of a U.N. convention to which China is a party); calls for the presidential appointment of a special envoy for North Korean human rights; and makes human rights a central issue in future American negotiations with Pyongyang. Credit for the bill's passage goes to a handful of senators, including Evan Bayh, Sam Brownback, and Richard Lugar, and to a unique interfaith coalition led by evangelical Christians. North Korea is what Jeane Kirkpatrick calls "a psychotic state"—and such states are "rare" in history. The regime holds as many as 200,000 political prisoners, and one expert estimates that it daily murders at least 42 people in its prison camps and 391 through starvation. This bill, which has also unanimously passed the House, may not be much. But it's not nothing.

■ Democracy—you gotta love it. There will be an election October 31 in Ukraine, and campaigners for candidate (and current prime minister) Viktor Yanukovich have organized a free striptease show at a Donetsk bar in a bid to win votes for their man. There was a time, let it be fondly recalled, when American campaigners were not above such inducements. Nowadays all they offer is lapel pins and bumper stickers (and the occasional batch of drugs, or cigarettes). Ever get the feeling that our politics has lost some of its flavor? Does McCain-Feingold say anything about lap dances?

■ The "hip-hop artist" KRS-One, *né* Kris Parker, thinks the 9/11 attacks served us right. He thinks, in fact, that they were a splendid thing, happily admits to having cheered them, and claims that many other black Americans did likewise. The grounds for Mr. Parker's satisfaction were that prior to the attacks, security guards kept people like him out of the World Trade Center "because of the way we talk and dress." Warming to his theme, Mr. Parker added: "When the planes hit the building, we were like, 'Mmmm—justice.'" Listening to these obscene maunderings, many Americans must wonder why a person with such hatred for our country goes on living here. Surely, among the world's 190-odd nations, there is one whose ambience is less repellent to him? Saudi Arabia? Zimbabwe? North Korea? Ah, but then he might not be able to enjoy the lifestyle a hip-hop star is accustomed to—or, for that matter, the pleasures of scandalizing Whitey with outrageous remarks.

■ The Great Scandinavian Frolic of the Nobel Prize usually enlivens the fall season. This year's Frolic is particularly rich in human comedy. Wangari Maathai, a lady from Kenya, wins the Peace Prize for starting a movement that is both green and feminist, getting women to plant 30 million trees in her country. Maathai and other women once stripped naked in downtown Nairobi as a protest. She also thinks that AIDS is a biological weapon developed in the West to kill black people. Oh, and she was best friends with Bella Abzug. "We have added a new dimension to the concept of peace," says the fellow handing out the swollen check. Yessir, but Maathai is a boringly sober citizen compared with Elfriede Jelinek, winner of the Literature Prize. She's Austrian, also a feminist, and was a Communist from 1974 to 1991. What a wonderful time span for membership! Her subject, according to one enthused report, is sex, "raw, depraved, sadomasochistic." What the Frolic committee particularly likes is the way she has abandoned "traditional dialogue for a kind of polyphonic monologues." She suffers, she tells us, from "social phobia." There isn't a satirist alive who could invent any of this.

■ The Economics Prize, fortunately, is more serious. The latest one went to Edward Prescott, an adviser to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minnesota, and Finn Kydland of Carnegie Mellon University. Their work contributed to the dethroning of the orthodox Keynesianism regnant after World War II. And they are still contributing to our economic understanding. Prescott, in a recent study, found that the reason Americans work so much harder than Europeans—which was not true in the early 1970s—is that marginal tax rates on work are now lower here. Prescott argues that letting people invest their Social Security funds would further increase the returns to work and saving. Not surprisingly, he is a strong supporter of President Bush.

■ Facing the "crippling prospect" of "worldwide inter-Anglican conflict," a commission appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury has rebuked the Episcopal Church of the United States for ordaining Bishop Gene Robinson, a divorced gay man who lives with his lover. The commission also asked conservative Third World bishops not to minister to disaffected American conservatives. The commission thus produced a very Anglican statement: It hit the pause button, in the name of consensus, not principle, and it affirmed church organization boxes. Conservative Anglicans may not long accept it: Archdeacon Oluranti Odubogun of Nigeria said, "Ordaining homosexuals is heresy, un-Biblical, should never have been done, and should be reversed." While Anglicanism in America is engaged in liberal therapy, the church in Africa is on the front lines battling AIDS and radical Islam. If the Anglican communion splits, one side will get the pretty buildings and the endowments, the other will get the energy.

■ Jazz at Lincoln Center, a popular and well-funded New York City jazz program, has opened in new quarters at the Time Warner Center on Columbus Circle, to a spate of articles on its famous artistic director, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. We hear about his glittering career, his pugnacious defense of jazz tradition, his recent mellowing. Has he mellowed enough to admit that white musicians can play jazz? Marsalis has been a follower of Albert Murray and Stanley Crouch, black writers who expounded what Leonard Feather called "Crow Jim"—jazz is the blues, the blues is black, therefore only blacks can play jazz.

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Ever get the idea that the only route to a bachelors degree is through a series of philosophical left turns?

It's true that on most college campuses catching a glimpse of a conservative professor is about as rare as a sighting of Sasquatch during rush hour. That would be funny if it didn't have such serious implications.

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THE WEEK...

Goodbye then to Bill Evans and Benny Goodman; goodbye also to Louis Armstrong, who said "cats of any color" could "get together and blow." Black jazz critics, like non-practitioners in all fields, get together and blow hard. Is the most powerful jazz impresario in America still covering their charts?

■ The latest group to claim "pride" in their lifestyle choice is the asexuals. One percent of respondents to a recent survey agreed with the statement "I have never felt sexually attracted to anyone at all." Researchers believe the true proportion of asexuals may be higher—perhaps as many as 3 percent, the same as the proportion of homosexuals in the population—but that many asexuals, fearing scorn and ridicule, are afraid to come out of the . . . well, out of whatever place it is that asexuals practice their asexuality in. When a NATIONAL REVIEW editor published these numbers on our website, he received a sheaf of e-mails to the effect of, "It's way more than 1 percent, and the condition is known as 'marriage.'" Fie on these cynics!—but good luck to the asexuals in their efforts to obtain public acknowledgment, understanding, and approval. May we look forward to an annual "A" Pride parade down New York's Fifth Avenue?—the marchers perhaps chanting, "Two! Four! Six! Eight! We don't want to copulate!"

■ Jacques Derrida was a thinker of many facets. His method of analysis, known as "deconstruction," could be seen, on a narrow view, as a close reading of texts with the aim of analyzing ambiguities and seeming contradictions, issuing sometimes in the conclusion that important texts—all texts perhaps—are meaningless. At a more radical reach, the Derridean view could be seen as a fundamental assault on rationality and civilization. From an entirely different perspective, Derrida could be seen as merely a liberal, casting a liberating doubt upon absolutes. Probably American academics took all of this with undue seriousness, there being a distinctively Parisian intellectuality about it: ideas as clever games, intellectual pâté de foie gras. (One remembers that Burke, on his first visit to Paris, was annoyed by the frivolity of the philosophes he met. Of course they did not believe many of the things they said, the pleasure being in the saying of them.) Nonetheless, Derrida belonged to a group of French philosophers, or anti-philosophers—Althusser, Barthes, Foucault, Lacan—whose principal effect was to destroy the teaching of literature in American universities. Students, wanting to discuss novels and poems, heard instead about "theory," often expounded in impenetrable and hieratic language. Classrooms, justifiably, emptied. A road-to-Damascus defection from theory by Frank Lentricchia of Duke proved a harbinger, as he realized that, by God, he had gotten into this field because he enjoyed works of . . . literature; with joy he returned to poems and novels and other actual works. The cloud of theory now has passed, a curious interlude. M. Derrida has died in Paris at 74, warmly remembered by friends on both sides of the Atlantic. R.I.P.

■ Unlucky Pierre Salinger was a one-man epitome of the unraveling of post-war liberalism. He hunted Japanese subs during World War II, and labor racketeers as a reporter and a congressional staffer, then served as John F. Kennedy's charming, hedonistic press secretary. Post-Dallas, he followed the Kennedys to the Democratic party's left, working for Bobby, then for George McGovern. The grossness of an increasingly conservative America drove him to France whence, in later years, he peddled conspiracy theories: Pan Am Flight 103 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 because of a bungled DEA operation; TWA Flight 800 was shot down over Long Island in 1996 by an errant Navy missile. He also wrote a preface to a book of short stories by Moammar Qaddafi (the real author of the Lockerbie mass murder). In Salinger's favor, you can say that Ramsey Clark turned out worse. R.I.P.

■ Rodney Dangerfield was a great American, leading a classic American life. Born Jacob Cohen, he grew up poor, in a broken home. He was desperate for show business, but failed. He settled down to a conventional life—but he tried again, and succeeded, in his 40s. He battled crippling depression, and overcame. In a youth-mad culture, he became a superstar—not just a star, but a superstar—in his 60s and 70s. Three years ago, at age 79, he gave a concert in Avery Fisher Hall, at Lincoln Center. His act over, he reemerged from the wings to say a final word: "My old man, who was in vaudeville, said, 'You can always count on a New York audience.'" All of America could count on him. R.I.P.

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continued from cover

. . . Bush has overseen progress on all three fronts. Afghanistan is no longer a secure base for terrorists. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan seem to be responding, ever so slowly and inadequately, to American pressure to side with us in the war on terrorism. The Pakistani nuclear bazaar has been shut down. Libya has agreed to dismantle its nuclear program. Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq is no longer a threat to our interests in the region, and the country has begun to take its first halting steps toward decent self-government. Law enforcement has gotten new tools with which to investigate and deter terrorist plots. Bush has reduced the gravest threat we face, that of terrorists with weapons of mass destruction.

There have been mistakes along the way. Bush relied on flawed intelligence about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

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When the error became apparent, he did not admit it forthrightly and explain to the American public why regime change was nonetheless necessary. Bush allowed bickering between departments of his administration to complicate post-war operations. He backed off in Fallujah in April, with grave consequences. Bush's diplomacy toward Europe has lacked vigor and far-sightedness. If Bush understands that continued European integration would deprive us of many of the allies we still have, he has shown no evidence of it. The ideological component of the war on terrorism should be stronger.

Yet Bush has shown evidence of being able to learn from his mistakes. We have made political strides in Iraq, the most visible one being the handover of power to a friendly government. Military progress has taken place in Najaf, and may soon in Fallujah. Most important, Bush has resisted considerable pressure to abandon Iraq to the killers. And the soundness of his strategy would outweigh tactical errors much larger than any he has made.

We remain convinced that President Bush's most important foreign-policy decision—the decision to invade Iraq—was the right one. The status quo, in which the U.S. kept troops stationed in Saudi Arabia, enforced the no-fly zone, and tried to fight foreign efforts to weaken sanctions on Saddam, was unsustainable. The regime would sooner or later have emerged from sanctions to wreak havoc. Its record included gassing the Kurds, provoking a war with us, and attempting to assassinate one of our former presidents. Its reigning ideology was both expansionist and anti-American. Finally, its elimination created the opportunity to begin to change the region in ways favorable to America's long-term security.

The Clinton administration dealt with gathering threats by deferring confrontation—by kicking the can down the road. That was its pattern in North Korea and Iraq, and it is still John Kerry's position on Iran. President Bush has preferred to address threats now, even at some risk. The situation in North Korea remains perilous. But Bush has had more success than the critics expected at assembling a coalition, including China, to constrain Pyongyang, and at prodding the Europeans to wake up to the Iranian threat.

Contrast this approach to that of the challenger. In his foreign policy, as in his cultural politics, Kerry is one of the most liberal men a major party has ever nominated. He is deeply suspicious of American power. And his approach to the Iraq war has not been notably public-spirited.

Bush risked his presidency on the Iraq war. Kerry has risked nothing. He kept his options open, positioning himself to be able to say he supported the war if it proved successful and that he opposed it if not. On his own telling, he voted to let Bush threaten Iraq with war. But the French proving recalcitrant, and dragging Germany and the U.N. Security Council with them, Kerry thinks that Bush should not have actually gone to war. What Kerry voted for, in other words, was an empty threat. After the war, he voted against funding the reconstruction effort—just weeks after saying such a vote would be "reckless" and "irresponsible." Perhaps there is room for electoral calculation in foreign policy, but the level of cynicism displayed here goes well beyond the normal bounds.

Kerry believes that Bush has been too unilateralist, too dismissive of allies. There may be some truth to this. But many of the things Bush has done to offend Europe were necessary and right. He withdrew from the ABM treaty, said no to Kyoto, and said an equally firm no to the International Criminal Court. In so doing, he protected American security, the American economy, and American sovereignty. Kerry's alternative approach to Europe—deferring as a matter of principle to the French and the EU—would be folly. (To be more precise, the Kerry alternative is to defer to the Europeans except on trade, where he would defer instead to the labor unions.) Alliances are a means, not an end. In Iraq, we suspect that Kerry's real policy would be to quit prematurely. That is what his party wants, and it is the logic of his underlying view that the battle there is a diversion from our true interests.

Bush deserves conservative support, as well, on domestic issues. We are well aware of all the legitimate conservative criticisms that can be made of his record, having made them ourselves. On campaign finance, on education, on immigration, and above all on spending he has disappointed us, sometimes deeply. In a second term we will urge him to do better—and urge congressional Republicans to insist on it.

We remain convinced that President Bush's most important foreign-policy decision—the decision to invade Iraq—was the right one. The status quo . . . was unsustainable.

But the president cut income-tax rates for the first time in 15 years. His tax cuts probably softened the recession he inherited. They also improved the structure of the tax code, which will no longer be as biased against savings and investment. The president has given official support, for the first time, to a reform of Social Security based on private investment. That reform, if enacted in Bush's second term, could reduce federal spending over the long term so substantially that the recent budget increases would begin to seem like a rounding error. After decades in which Republicans either neglected health care or acquiesced in liberal policies, Bush enacted the robust free-market reform of health savings accounts, which may arrest and even reverse our long drift toward socialized medicine.

In his nominations, Bush has sought to move the federal judiciary toward a properly restrained view of its role. If the Democrats retake the White House, school choice could well be ruled unconstitutional, the people's right to decide whether to impose the death penalty could be substantially restricted, and the grisly practice of partial-birth abortion will continue to be protected from the bench. Bush has gone far, within the bounds of political possibility, to address the injustice of abortion and other assaults on nascent human life. And he has tried to prevent the courts from assuming even more power, by supporting a constitutional amendment to keep them from redefining marriage.

We cannot guarantee that in a second term, Bush would nominate judicial conservatives to the Supreme Court, or

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press for Social Security reform, or fight the war on terrorism with intelligence and firmness of purpose—nor that he would succeed if he did those things. But his willingness to embrace startling changes, to ignore his media critics, and to set conservative priorities argues in favor of optimism. He is certainly more likely to promote these conservative policies than John Kerry would be. Kerry's top domestic priorities appear to be to raise the top marginal tax rates, to appoint liberal judges, to fund research that clones and then kills human embryos, and to expand government control over health-care markets.

It has been a long and difficult four years, largely as a result of events not of Bush's making. For conservatives, however, backing Bush's reelection should be an easy decision.

notes & asides

■ *WFB's remarks recorded for Hillsdale College's gala dinner launching the Founders' Campaign and celebrating the unveiling of Buckley Online (www.hillsdale.edu/Buckley).*

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: Dressed as you are in your finery, as if for opening night at the Metropolitan Opera, you might be voicing the fugitive thought that I, sitting in my office in Stamford, Connecticut, am more comfortable than you. If that is your fleeting thought, please know that only a very painful accident affecting my mobility keeps me away from your distinguished and lively company. I say "lively company," confident that you have in reach a glass of wine. Please note that I do not, even though there are no rules on this subject, operative in this little place, that aren't of my own devising.

So . . . welcome to my innermost sanctum, where, decade after decade, I write the material Hillsdale has done me the honor of memorializing. I don't know whether the camera is giving you a generous view of my own private pandemonium, but I do hope you have spotted my stained-glass windows. They are here to elevate my thoughts, when this is not achieved by what I write down. And they console me now, deprived as I am of your company in real time.

Many of us, especially those who recall when they were young in the unique sense in which freshman college students are young, have marveled at the offerings of the information age. When I was a freshman, we had dictionaries and encyclopedias, and I remember discovering something called *Facts on File*. This service abridged the week's news in an 8-page bulletin. At the end of every month, subscribers received a summary, with autocratically worded instructions to throw away the anachronized weekly bulletins.

And then every quarter, we received a three-month round-up with—once again—hortatory instructions to discard accumulated monthly issues. And finally, you guessed it, at year's end you received a bound volume incorporating the news for the entire year. Oh yes! With instructions to throw away everything from *Facts on File* other than the year's collection.

Facts on File survives, but of course for much of the research people do there is no longer any such phenomenon as printed matter, unless you take it into your head actually to print something you have read on the screen. And you can read *all* about *everything* on your screen.

There are, for instance, numerous entries under the heading "Hillsdale College." One of them even gives the campus location as "north of College Street." The site does not tell you what's located, in Hillsdale, *south* of College Street. The researcher no doubt exists—or if not, is a spark in the eye of his mother—who will look into the question and provide the information.

Meanwhile you are free to poke about, exploring other aspects of Hillsdale College. I found such listed in one entry which began with "Tuition & Financial Aid." Then on to "Ranking," "Transfer Students," "Services and Facilities," "Campus Life," "Sports," "Academics," "International Students," "Student Body," "Extracurriculars," "Disabled Students," . . . and finally—lo and behold—"Mission."

However resourceful are the facilities of the Internet, they are insufficient to define the mission of most modern universities, inasmuch as the very idea of a collegiate mission is held to be discriminatory. You see, in order to have a mission, you are required to acknowledge the existence of anti-missions, even as to *include* requires that you *exclude*, as the late Mr. Derrida spent a lifetime pointing out. And to do this—a point I tried to make in a book published in 1951 about Yale—is a transgression on academic freedom. Academic freedom holds implicitly that all ideas, when exposed to student eyes, should start out "even in the race"; so that to encourage freedom, let alone to encourage the proposition that there is a correlation between freedom and decentralized government, is profane.

Concerted academic thought designed to illuminate such insights is held to be corrupting. Corporate academic aims impose upon the student by trying to conscript him to aims other than those that float up in that student's pure, deracinated mind, unfreighted by empirical history or pondered thought. And so we have the contemporary absorption with alien and disparate ideas, which, happily, are pursued mostly with non-missionary zeal.

This is hardly to suggest that a college that professes a mission therefore excludes the expression of alien ideas or even the germination of them. Ideas of many kinds are expressed on this venerable campus, for instance. At a base political level, I remember debating here with Senators Hart and McGovern, the resolution before the house being that government is not the solution, but the problem.

Thanks to Hillsdale's epochal new information service, "Buckley Online,"

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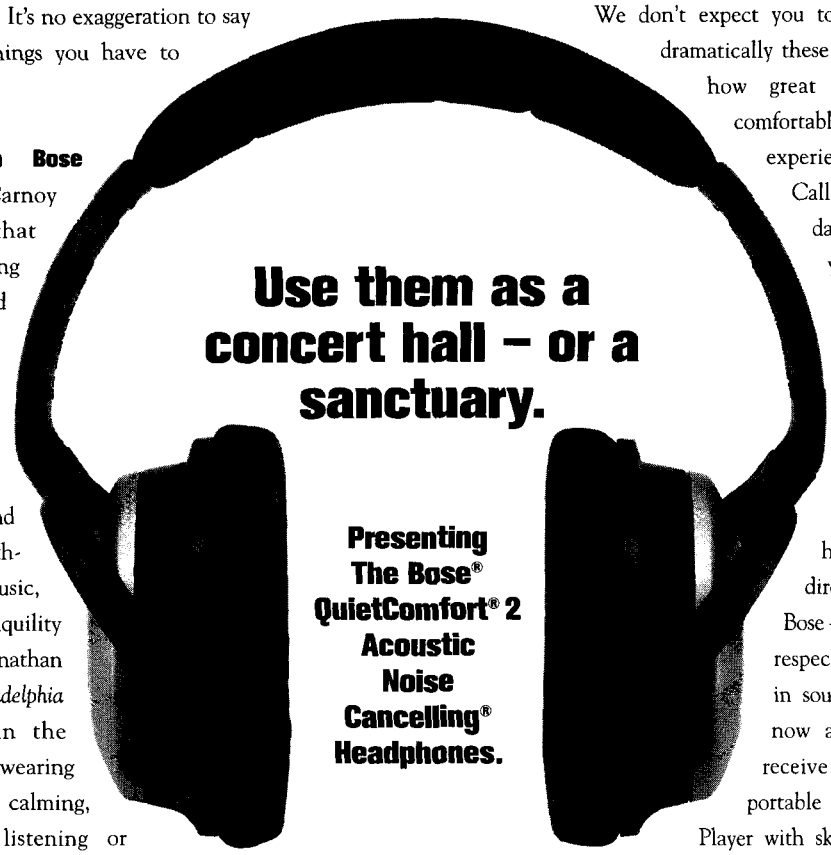

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notes & asides

I have been able, even in my incapacitation, to pull up the transcript of that televised debate. I quote from my opening statement:

"If we train our minds on the problem, Mr. Chairman"—I was addressing President George Roche, who was presiding at the debate—"and do so enlisting the faculty of Hillsdale College to assist us, I am certain that we can find *something* that the government has done that is useful and productive. One thinks for instance, of the Bureau of Weights and Measures, which as far as I know has done nothing, in my lifetime, or even in the 150-year-old history of this college"—this was ten years ago—"to shrink or enlarge the foot, exaggerate the dimension of an inch, or modify the cubic content of a quart. Yes, the Bureau of Weights and Measures is a *useful government service.*" I elaborated: "And yes, now and again the government has put a traitor out of business, which was good work, but then why were we afraid of traitors, except that they might deliver us into the hands of a hostile—a hostile what?

"A hostile government."

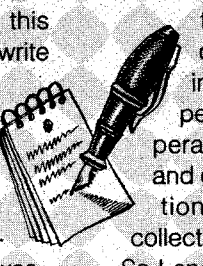
* * *

If you are at this point tempted to wonder whether I am going on and on at your expense, I excuse myself by the simple act of adducing the debut of the Buckley Online website, which Hillsdale has furnished the entire world, and it *does* go on and on, as have I, for so many years.

But this is not a service I have come to this campus, or rather, failed to come to this campus, in order to berate. I believe in voluminous expression. More specifically, I am here to celebrate the voluminous expansion of accessible expression, specifically, my own, courtesy of Hillsdale College. But I do think I caught a wink in the eye of President Arnn when he suggested this summer an appropriate subject for what was to have been my luncheon talk, metastasized into this pre-dinner talk. He suggested as the theme, "Writing Too Much."

That idea for a speech by me has to have originated with the sly curator of the Hillsdale Library, grown weary of the burdens I continue to impose on her. "Writing Too Much" is an appropriate reproach to those who do seem to go on and on. In the current issue of *Commentary*, Dan Seligman reviews my autobiography, *Miles Gone By*, and speaks of my having written "34 books of non-fiction, 15 novels, 81 book reviews, 56 introductions, prefaces, and forewords to other people's books, 222 obituary essays, 800 articles and editorials in National Review, and 4,000 syndicated columns." But to write as if the elephantiasis had been arrested would be misleading, because that summary provided by Mr. Seligman originated in an ISI publication done by librarian William Meehan, formerly of Hillsdale, and that bibliography took us through December 2000, and so does not list anything written in the past four years.

We did not need modern technology to document how much a writer can produce. When does the author know whether he is writing too much? There isn't a graven finding on this question. Most authors tend to write regularly. Anthony Trollope rose for bath and breakfast at 5, began writing at 6, and timed himself to write 250 words every fifteen minutes, one thousand per hour, and he persevered for three hours. So fixed was this habit that if ever he found at the end of the second hour on Wednesday that he had actually concluded his novel, he went on without pause to begin another novel, before the fifteen-minute period had elapsed. The reviewer of my autobiography in next Sunday's *New York Times* says that "in sheer volume [Buckley's] work dwarfs even Trollope's." What I will never achieve is the talent of Anthony Trollope. On the other hand, he never had the pleasure I have taken in my association with Hillsdale College.



And this reminds me that there is no documentation, even here, of talks given under the auspices of Hillsdale. There have been a few of these, and I remember gratefully the wonderful evening here organized by Hillsdale's and my old friend Ronald Trowbridge. I have been in Hillsdale frequently in the past forty years, and perhaps it is appropriate that my brief remarks should address not only writing too much, but speaking too much. To the end of curbing that excess, I did terminate my *Firing Line* television program at midnight of the turn of the century, after 35 years, and I stopped speaking in public in the spring of 2001, after 50 years. Such an exception as I make today signals not a recrudescent verbosity but, rather, my exiguous effort to repay Hillsdale's extraordinary undertaking in tracking down so much of my work and making it available to generations inclined to the study of prolixity.

Writing too much is especially to be avoided if one becomes tedious. I like to think that I have not yet become tedious, but I acknowledge that if I had, I would almost certainly not recognize it, inasmuch as offenders are usually the last to identify their own shortcomings. I would have to await the day when Larry Arnn diplomatically declined to invite me to the campus—or perhaps, if he was truly desperate, pulled out his scissors and ordered an end to any additions to the Buckley Online collection.

So I end, before, I hope, the question arises of Talking Too Much. I can feel, even through this tape machine, a thousand miles away from Hillsdale, the special warmth of the occasion. That geniality is of course an aspect of friendships formed here, among students and friends of Hillsdale College. It is I think animated by the sense you have of a great collaboration, the nurturing of a body of students and scholars who cherish freedom and are devoted to the preservation and development of this matrix of informed thought, and devotion to God and country.

—WFB

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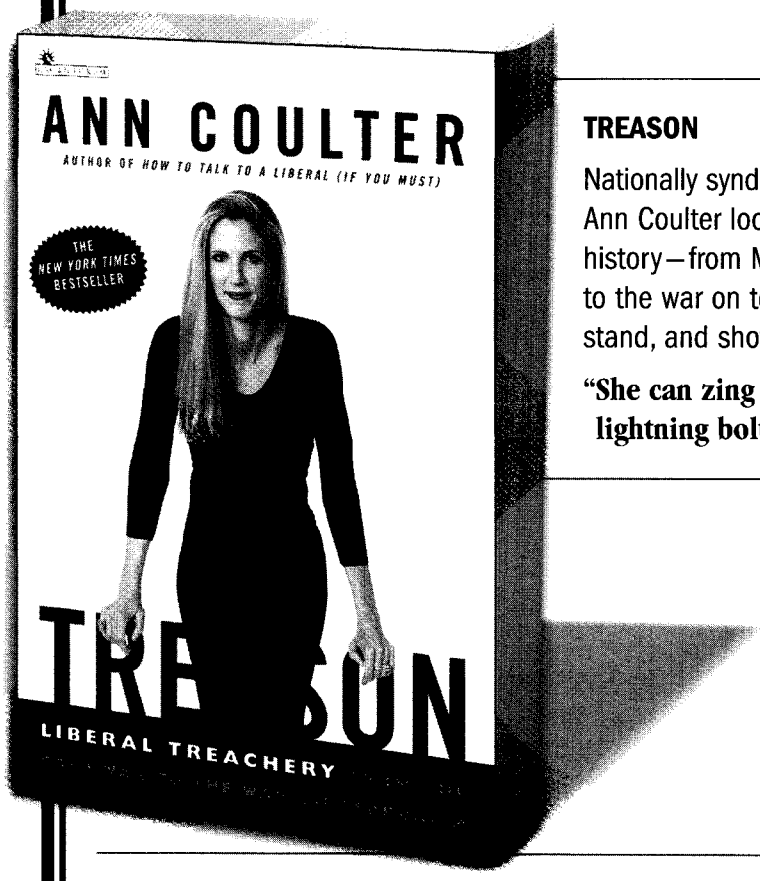

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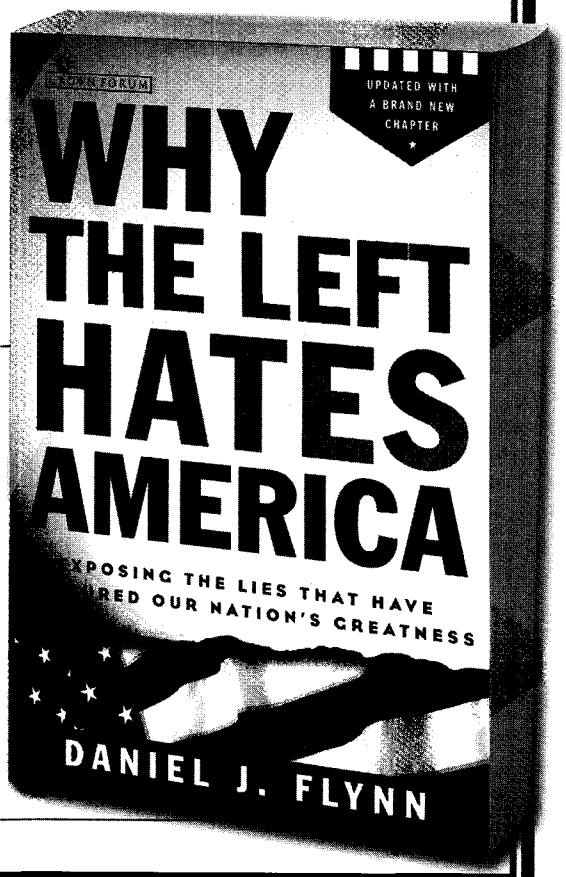
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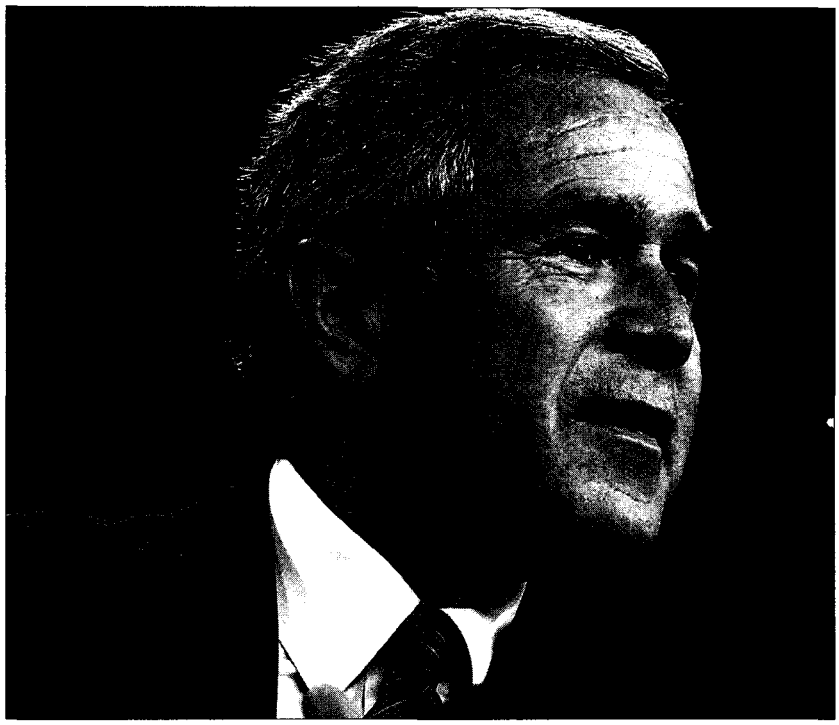

■ CAMPAIGN 2004 ■

President for Life

What the election means for abortion and related issues

ROBERT P. GEORGE & GERARD V. BRADLEY

In the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, the Supreme Court declared that "Africans"—that "unfortunate race"—had "no rights which the white man was bound to respect." What Chief Justice Roger Taney said then about black people, John Kerry says today about human beings in the embryonic and fetal stages of development. According to Kerry, they have no rights which those who desire to destroy them—whether to escape unwanted pregnancies or to exploit them for scientific research—are bound to respect. George W. Bush's position is the polar opposite: The unborn should be respected as members of the human family and protected by law.

For pro-life Americans, the choice between Bush and Kerry could not be starker; nor could the timing of the election be more crucial. John Kerry's *Dred Scott* decision is *Roe* v. *Wade*, the 1973 case that manufactured a virtually unlimited right to abortion. Kerry has vowed that as president he would exclude from eligibility for appointment to the Supreme Court any lawyer or judge, however superbly qualified, who would consider dismantling or even cutting back on the wholesale abortion license of *Roe*. Abortion must not only be preserved in law, it must be paid for by taxpayers—even those millions of taxpayers who, as a matter of conscience, judge abortion to be an unspeakable crime.

By contrast, President Bush not only will, but has, appointed to the federal bench constitutionalist judges who recognize that *Roe* was both a moral and a legal atrocity. He has sought to protect the unborn in the small number of ways permitted by *Roe*, and has blocked efforts to implicate taxpayers in abortions by funding them with federal dollars.

The lives of many nascent human beings hang in the balance of this presidential election. Indeed, the number of lives at stake goes far beyond those at risk of being destroyed by abortion—for the winner of the election will almost certainly settle, too, whether the federal government will fund the production of human beings by cloning to be deliberately killed in the embryonic stage for purposes of "harvesting" their cells and tissues for use in biomedical research. Kerry vigorously supports cloning human embryos for these purposes; Bush opposes all human cloning and embryo-killing.

Bush stepped into the Oval Office in January 2001 and promptly reinstated Ronald Reagan's "Mexico City" policy, which turned off the money spigot for international promoters of abortion. He supported and signed into law a ban on partial-birth abortion—a ban that Bill Clinton had twice vetoed. (The ban has been enjoined by judges citing *Roe* v. *Wade*.) President Bush signed the Born Alive Infants Protection Act, which protects the small number of children each year who survive abortions from being killed or abandoned to die once they exit the womb. He signed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act—"Laci and Conner's Law"—to ensure that murderers of pregnant women are punished for the deaths of both mother and child.

Despite enormous pressure to cave on the question of funding embryo-destructive research, Bush has held firm against embryo-killing. He has demonstrated his willingness and ability to stand up in the face of a campaign that has featured the shameful hyping of embryonic-stem-cell research, and disingenuous claims from both Kerry and Edwards that he is blocking cures for horrible diseases for the sake of upholding "right-wing ideology."

Again, the contrast with Kerry is striking. In 1984, Kerry vowed to vote against "any restrictions on age, consent, funding restrictions, or any law to limit

S. JOHN WILKIN/KRT

Mr. George is professor of jurisprudence and director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton. Mr. Bradley is professor of law at Notre Dame.

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access to abortion." However much he has flip-flopped and vacillated on other issues, when it comes to protecting and funding abortion, he has been ruthlessly true to his word. Over 20 years in the Senate, Kerry has established himself as an unsurpassed champion of the abortion lobby. He voted against the partial-birth-abortion ban six times. His hostility to the idea of protecting prenatal life is so extreme that he even voted against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act—a piece of legislation that protected unborn children while placing *no* restrictions on the practice of abortion. Kerry has solemnly promised the abortion lobby that his first executive order would be to reverse the Mexico City policy—thus putting American taxpayer money to work in promoting abortion abroad. He has even voted to deny federal funds to hospitals—including many Catholic ones—that refuse to perform abortions. For Kerry, "freedom" is a one-way street when it comes to abortion.

On the question of embryo-killing in biomedical research, Kerry not only supports it, but has made himself an evangelist for the cause. Indeed, he wants to go beyond using embryos currently stored in assisted-reproduction clinics. He aggressively supports legislation to authorize and publicly fund the production of an unlimited supply of human embryos for experimentation.

Given the records of the two presidential candidates—and considering the life-and-death decisions that the next president will make when it comes to judicial appointments and other decisions pertaining to abortion and embryo-destruction—anyone who perceives the injustice of abortion and embryo-destructive research should see a vote for Bush (or, at least, against Kerry) as a moral imperative. Yet there are those who resist this conclusion. They argue that Kerry's positions on other issues—taxation, environmental policy, health care, Iraq—warrant support for him, despite his hostility to the rights of nascent human beings.

One Kerry supporter has gone so far as to claim that voting for Kerry is the pro-life thing to do, despite the senator's appalling record on abortion. Notre Dame dean Mark Roche, in a *New York Times* op-ed piece, has insisted that Kerry's support for universal health care, a clean environment, and economic policies more favorable to those who are tempted to have abortions will decrease the abortion rate. He observes that abortions dropped in the Clinton years, after having increased during the Reagan presidency, presumably because of Reagan's economic and social policies. So Roche—while explicitly acknowledging support for abortion as an evil on a par with support for slavery in the 19th century—advises pro-lifers to "supplement their abstract desire for moral rectitude with a more realistic focus on how best to ensure that fewer abortions take place," and vote for Kerry.

Anyone who perceives the injustice of abortion and embryo-destructive research should vote for Bush.

We believe that the decrease in abortions in the 1990s had little to do with Clinton, and much to do with the takeover of Congress by a pro-life Republican majority that highlighted the evil of feticide by pressing the issue of partial-birth abortions. Additionally, the development of the sonogram has affected attitudes toward abortion by giving people a window into the beautiful, and undeniably human, life of the child in the womb.

Of course, social conditions will affect the abortion rate, particularly in a culture lacking legal support for basic sanctity-of-life principles. So, just for the sake of argument, let us assume for a moment that Roche is right to think that Kerry's policies would be better than Bush's when it comes to lowering the abortion rate. It *still* would not yield the paradoxical conclusion that voting for Kerry is a pro-life act. That is because any reduction in the abortion rate under Kerry would be massively offset by his avowed commitment to authorize and fund a massive embryo-production industry to feed labs interested in doing research on cloned human beings. That is what makes support for Kerry morally impossible even for those pro-life citizens who are most optimistic about the positive impact of Democratic policies. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2004**

Kerry's Cold War

Lest we forget . . .

MONA CHAREN

In the first presidential debate, John Kerry, adopting his most statesman-like pose, scored President Bush for damaging U.S. "credibility" among world leaders. "We need to rebuild our alliances. I believe that Ronald Reagan, John Kennedy, and the others did that more effectively, and I'm going to try to follow in their footsteps."

Give the man credit for audacity. For Kerry to invoke Ronald Reagan is a little like Henry II invoking Becket. With the possible exceptions of Christopher Dodd and Tom Harkin, no senator did more than Kerry to thwart Reagan's vigorous foreign policy. Kerry was a charter member of the anti–anti-Communist club. There was no measure that Reagan backed—from rebuilding the military, to placing INF missiles in Europe, to supporting anti-Communist insurgents in Central America—that Kerry approved. But it was worse than that: Like so many of the anti-Vietnam War Left, Kerry was weaned on contempt for this country and its purposes. It isn't that he differed with Reagan about tactics in the Cold War: Kerry, like so many on the left, did not even want to fight it.

The most disgraceful aspects of Kerry's 1971 congressional testimony are now familiar (thanks to the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth). He repeated allegations that the American soldier had become "a monster" who committed atrocities against civilians daily, "with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command." The complete text reveals how thoroughly the 27-year-old Kerry

Mona Charen is a syndicated columnist and the author of *Useful Idiots: How Liberals Got It Wrong in the Cold War and Still Blame America First.*

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was marinated in anti-Americanism. It wasn't just the Vietnam War that enraged him: "We are here in Washington also to say that the problem of this war is not just a question of war and diplomacy. It is part and parcel of everything that we are trying, as human beings, to communicate to people in this country—the question of racism, which is rampant in the military, and so many other questions also, the use of weapons: the hypocrisy of our taking umbrage in the Geneva Conventions and using that as justification for a continuation of this war, when we are more guilty than any other body of violations of those Geneva Conventions."

"Guilty" was the word that best described Kerry's view of America's Cold War position. After Reagan ordered American troops to liberate the tiny island of Grenada, which was becoming a Cuban satellite, Kerry huffed that the mission was "a bully's show of force against a weak Third World nation. The invasion only served to heighten world tensions and further strain brittle U.S./Soviet and North/South relations." He ran for the Senate in 1984 on a platform calling for cuts in defense spending. "We are continuing a defense build-up that is consuming our resources with weapons systems that we don't need and can't use," his campaign literature declared. If elected, Kerry promised to "reorder federal budget priorities from the current excess focus on the military to proper attention to human needs in the United States and throughout the world."

Kerry was an early and ardent backer of the nuclear freeze—a proposal that would have prevented the U.S. from modernizing its nuclear forces and would have cemented the USSR's advantage in land-based ICBMs. The Soviets too were eager to see the freeze proposal adopted—which would have been enough to give a wiser man pause. And while the appeal of the freeze, on the surface, was its supposed parity, Kerry let it be known that he favored cutting back America's forces even in the absence of Soviet reciprocity. Responding to a 1984 candidate survey, Kerry indicated that even prior to a "mutual verifiable freeze" he would vote against funding the B-1, the MX missile, the Stealth bomber, Midgetman, the Trident submarine, the Trident I (C-4) missile, the Trident II (D-5) missile, the cruise missile, the Pershing II missiles, Neutron warheads, anti-satellite weapons, ballistic missile defense, and the Strategic Defense Initiative.

When Reagan died last June, Kerry gave him credit for shaping "one of the greatest victories of freedom." He didn't talk that way when the Cold War was a going concern. At the 1988 Democratic convention, Kerry proclaimed that Reagan's era of "moral darkness" was about to come to an end with the election of Michael Dukakis.

'Guilty' was the word that best described Kerry's view of America's Cold War position.

Kerry was a devout communicant of the church of arms control. He was for it mutually if possible, and unilaterally if necessary. Thus, he opposed one of Reagan's most significant steps in bringing the Cold War to a victorious conclusion: the placement of INF missiles in Western Europe to counter the placement of Soviet intermediate-range missiles in Eastern Europe in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Had NATO failed to respond to that Soviet provocation—had the alliance followed the lead of John Kerry—the history of the Cold War would have looked very different.

Kerry held the view of most mainstream liberals at the time: that arms control was the only rational road to "peaceful coexistence" of East and West and that any effort by the U.S. to assert itself and promote freedom was provocative and "destabilizing." In 1985, Kerry declared: "It is time we accept the idea that the Soviet Union is not going to bargain with the United States from a position in which we have grabbed the upper hand through the development of some new technology. They are only going to agree with the United States on arms limitations if they have parity in overall force capacity." Liberals did not believe in "grabbing the upper hand." Victory was not their goal; accommodation was.

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The anti-Cold Warriors always believed that they held the moral high ground. As they saw it, the U.S. was an arrogant, reactionary power standing in the way of progress. Sen. Christopher Dodd, Kerry's ideological soul mate, condemned the Reagan administration for standing against "the tide of history" in Central America. This seemed to be Kerry's view as well: His first major act as a senator was to join Tom Harkin on a "fact-finding" trip to Nicaragua. "Senator Harkin and I," Kerry declared, "are going to Nicaragua as Vietnam-era veterans who are alarmed that the Reagan administration is repeating the mistakes we made in Vietnam. Our foreign policy should represent the democratic values that have made our country great, not subvert those values by funding terrorism to overthrow governments of other countries."

That was April 1985. By that time, the Communist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua had already welcomed massive Cuban and Soviet influence, militarized the country by quintupling the size of the armed forces, shut down independent radio and TV stations, imposed censorship and harassment on the nation's leading newspaper, burned Managua's only synagogue, forced Catholic schools to teach Marxism/Leninism, tortured and killed a number of evangelical Protestants, armed the Communist guerrillas in neighboring El Salvador, persecuted the Miskito Indians, and jailed more political prisoners than any nation in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba.

Kerry and Ortega meet in Managua, April 1985.

But according to the Kerry/Harkin, anti-Cold War, Left/liberal view of the world, the trouble with Central America was that the U.S. was, in Kerry's words, "militarizing the region." Serious "internationalists," like the two senators, would substitute diplomacy for force, and talking for fighting.

Kerry and Harkin left Managua quite impressed with junta leader Daniel Ortega, who had offered them, they claimed, "some very, very useful information" that they would share with their fellow senators just days before a scheduled congressional vote on aiding the anti-Communist Contras. Kerry boasted that he had spent more time with Ortega than had the U.S. secretary of state. Ortega apparently promised that he would adopt a ceasefire and open negotiations with the Contras if Congress rejected Reagan's aid request. "The real question," said Kerry, "is, Does this administration want to pursue negotiations, or is it committed to force?"

The Democrat-dominated Congress—Kerry very much included—voted down aid to the Contras a few days later, and a few days after that Daniel Ortega jetted off to Moscow seeking aid. "He embarrassed us, to be perfectly truthful," House Speaker Tip O'Neill later admitted.

But not enough, apparently. Kerry consistently opposed aid to the Contras even after Ortega's stunt (some other Democrats changed their votes). He also voted against helping El Salvador fight off a Communist insurgency. Kerry spent his remaining Central America energies on investigating possible ties between the Contras and drug-smugglers and arms merchants. Kerry has made his Vietnam experience the touchstone of his campaign for the White House. This is altogether appropriate: Like a good anti-war liberal, Kerry has studiously applied the "lessons of Vietnam" to every challenge the U.S. has faced for 30 years—and he has been consistently wrong. He has been rigidly anti-military in situations that reminded him of Vietnam (Grenada, El Salvador, Nicaragua) and in those that didn't (Libya, Iraq). He exalts diplomacy over force everywhere and always.

Kerry never got the chance to lose the Cold War. But his deepest sympathies lie with those who distrust American assertiveness and worship international institutions. There is little doubt that a Kerry administration would faithfully apply the misbegotten "lessons of Vietnam" to the War on Terror—with possibly terrifying results. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2004**

Don't Know Much About Politics

The curse of the ignorant voter

KATE O'BEIRNE

THE breathless coverage that greets every new poll tracking the candidates' support delicately avoids the depressing reality of just whose opinion is being so scientifically sliced and diced. Despite the thousands of campaign ads and the oceans of spilled media ink over the past year, the ignorant voter outnumbers voters of all other stripes. That the public's knowledge of current affairs is in a sorry state is the only safe call we can make about this year's race.

"Most individual voters are abysmally ignorant of even very basic political information," George Mason law professor Ilya Somin concludes in a recent paper for the Cato Institute. Somin recognizes that what's well understood by political scientists is rarely acknowledged in political commentary. "The sheer depth of most individual voters' ignorance is shocking to observers not familiar with the research," he writes.

Although, as NATIONAL REVIEW readers, you can count yourselves among the 5 percent of voters who pay close attention to policy and politics. About 70 percent of Americans don't know that Congress recently passed a Medicare prescription-drug plan—the largest federal-entitlement expansion in decades. Sixty-five percent don't know that a ban on partial-birth abortion has been enacted, and almost 60 percent have heard either nothing (30 percent) or very little (28 percent) about the controversial Patriot Act. A majority is unable to estimate even roughly how many American troops have been killed in Iraq. More than 60 percent of the public doesn't know that big increases in domestic

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spending have had a substantial impact on the deficit.

The evidence revealing voter ignorance about the dominant issues in the current campaign is unsurprising; it tracks with the typical state of voters' knowledge. Prior to the hotly contested mid-term elections two years ago, only about a third of voters knew that Republicans controlled the House of Representatives. In 1994, a month after the Republicans' triumphant takeover of the House, 57 percent of Americans had never even heard of Newt Gingrich. Generally, slight majorities know which party controls the Senate, but 70 percent can't name either of their state's senators and, even at the height of a campaign, a large majority can't name any candidate running in their congressional districts. Less than half the public can define either "conservative" or "liberal" with any degree of accuracy.

There are comprehensive data about voters' knowledge during the 2000 presidential campaign. That year, the National Election Survey (NES), which has collected data for every election since 1948, and, according to Somin, is "considered the most thorough social scientific survey of the U.S. electorate," asked voters 31 questions covering basic political knowledge and simple information about the candidates and the campaign's hot topics. On average, fewer than half the questions were answered correctly. Large majorities had no idea whether spending on the poor increased or whether crime rates decreased during the '90s.

Somin argues in his paper that the failing grades voters earned on the survey probably overestimate voters' grasp of the requisite knowledge to vote intelligently. He notes that lucky guessing likely boosted scores and that three of the five questions voters handled most easily were of little help in voting intelligently. (For example, voters did know the home states of the candidates and Sen. Joe Lieberman's religion.) And, more alarming still, there is a clearly defined bottom of the class. At least a quarter of voters are "know-nothings" who possess little or no political knowledge. Women are almost twice as likely as men "to suffer from a near-total absence of political knowledge," Somin explains.

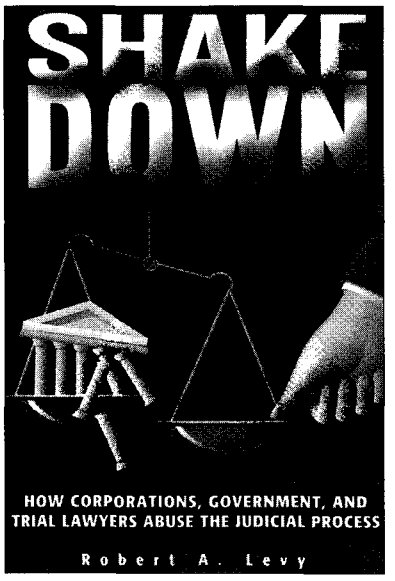
In an *Iowa Law Review* article discussing how widespread political ignorance has an impact on constitutional theory about the proper role of the courts, Professor Somin explains that the male-female difference in political knowledge is "extremely large." The average difference between the sexes' scores on the NES survey is roughly equivalent to the difference between a high-school dropout and a community- or junior-college graduate. While 10 percent of men are in the top 5 percent on the political-knowledge scale, just 2 percent of women top the charts. Even when other variables—such as education and income—between men and women are controlled, the difference in political knowledge between the sexes remains uncomfortably large.

On all 31 questions on the 2000 NES survey, men had a higher rate of correct answers than women, including on issues presumed to be of greater interest to the fairer sex. More men than women knew that Janet Reno was the (first female!) U.S. attorney general (67 percent to 47 percent), and more men than women knew that Al Gore supported abortion rights (49 percent to 44 percent). While surveys show that women tend to hold liberal views on many domestic issues, the NES survey reveals their opinions are unlikely to have an impact on how they vote. The majority of women, for instance, had no idea whether Al Gore or George Bush was the more supportive of gun control or environmental regulation.

Somin recognizes that the intimidating size and reach of the federal government makes it difficult for even well-informed citizens to be informed enough to understand its complex operations. He cites evidence that suggests a less educated citizenry of the 19th century was able to appreciate complex policy arguments, and also hypothesizes that voters then were able to focus on debates over the limited number of issues that a strictly limited government was able to control.

Political scientists generally regard voter ignorance as rational—given the inability of a single voter to affect the outcome of an election. The president's supporters can only hope that voters who "rationally" decide to remain ignorant will also make a rational choice on November 2. **NR**

A sweeping indictment of lawsuits abuse



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■ CAMPAIGN 2004

The Old (Electoral) College Cheer

Why we have it; why we need it

MICHAEL M. UHLMANN

As the late Rodney Dangerfield might say, the Electoral College just don't get no respect. Polls show that most Americans, given the opportunity, would cashier it tomorrow in favor of so-called direct election. That they'd live to regret their decision only reminds us of H. L. Mencken's definition of democracy: a form of government in which the people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard. What the people would get by choosing direct election is the disintegration of the state-based two-party system; the rise of numerous factional parties based on region, class, ideology, or cult of personality; radicalized public opinion, frequent runoff elections, widespread electoral fraud, and centralized control of the electoral process; and, ultimately, unstable national government that veers between incompetence and tyrannical caprice. And that's only a partial list.

Dissatisfaction with the electoral-vote system has been a staple of populist rhetoric ever since presidential elections became fully democratized in the 1820s. More than 700 constitutional amendments have been introduced to change the system—by far the greatest number on any subject—and although reform prescriptions have varied greatly in detail, their common assumption has always been that our electoral rules prevent the true voice of the people from being heard.

Mr. Uhlmann teaches politics and policy at the Claremont Graduate University.

But what is the "true voice" of the people? Public sentiment can be expressed and measured in any number of ways, but not all are conducive to securing rights. If ascertaining the consent of the people were only a matter of counting heads until you got to 50 percent plus one, we could dispense with most of the distinctive features of the Constitution—not only electoral votes, but also federalism, the separation of powers, bicameralism, and staggered elections. All of these devices depart from simple majoritarianism, and for good reason: Men do not suddenly become angels when they acquire the right to vote; an electoral majority can be just as tyrannical as autocratic kings or corrupt oligarchs.

The Founders believed that while the selfish proclivities of human nature could not be eliminated, their baleful effects could be mitigated by a properly designed constitutional structure. Although the Constitution recognizes no other source of authority than the people, it takes pains to shape and channel popular consent in very particular ways. Thomas Jefferson perfectly captured the Framers' intent in his First Inaugural Address: "All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate which would be oppression." By reasonable majorities, Jefferson meant those that would reflect popular sentiment but, by the very manner of their composition, would be unable or unlikely to suppress the rights and interests of those in the minority. Accordingly, the Constitution understands elections not as ends in themselves, but as a means of securing limited government and equal rights for all.

The presidential election system helps to form reasonable majorities through the interaction of its three distinguishing attributes: the distribution and apportionment of electoral votes in accordance with the federal principle; the requirement that the winner garner a majority of electoral votes; and the custom (followed by 48 of 50 states) of awarding all of a state's electoral votes to the popular-vote victor within that state. Working together, these features link the presidency to the federal system, discourage third parties, and induce moderation on the part of candidates and interest groups alike. No candidate can win without a broad national coalition, assembled state by state yet compelled to transcend narrow geographic, economic, and social interests.

Reformers tend to assume that the mode of the presidential election can be changed without affecting anything else. Not so. As Sen. John F. Kennedy argued in the 1950s, by changing the method of the presidential election, you change not only the presidency but the entire political solar system of which it is an integral part. The presidency is at once the apex of our constitutional structure and the grand prize of the party system. Our method of selecting a president is the linchpin that holds both together. Capturing the presidency is the principal *raison d'être* of our political parties, whose structure, thanks to the electoral-vote system, mirrors the uniquely federal structure of the Constitution. This means that two-party competition is the norm; in a country of America's size and diversity, that is no small virtue.

With (for the most part) only two parties in contention, the major candidates are

Tallahassee, Fla., December 2000

ROBERT KING/GETTY

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forced to appeal to most of the same voters. This drives them both toward the center, moderates their campaign rhetoric, and helps the winner to govern more effectively once in office. Many factional interests, for their part, are under a reciprocal inducement to buy insurance with both sides, meaning the compromises necessary for successful rule will be made prior to and not after the election. Moreover, by making the states the principal electoral battlegrounds, the current system tends to insulate the nation against the effects of local voting fraud. All in all, the current system forces the ambitions of presidential candidates into the same constitutional mold that defines and tempers American political life as a whole. It thereby prevents the presidency from becoming a potentially dangerous tutelary force separate and apart from the rest of the Constitution's structure.

These and other salutary consequences would disappear under direct election, whose deceptive simplicities mask its truly radical character. If President Bush wins the 2004 electoral vote without a popular-vote plurality, you can be certain that the enactment of direct election will become a principal mission of the Democrats. And it may well become their mantra even if John Kerry wins. We came perilously close to enacting direct election following the 1968 contest, when George Wallace's third-party candidacy shattered the New Deal coalition of big-city machines and the one-party South. Fearing the long-run effects of Republican competition in the New South, Democrats tried to change the rules to their advantage. They will do so again as soon as the opportunity seems propitious, which it will if this year's election resembles 2000's.

In 1969, as President Nixon dithered and eventually ducked, direct election passed the House by a sizeable constitutional majority—including many Republicans who ought to have known better. But for a small and determined group of conservative Democratic and Republican senators who filibustered it to death, direct election would have been presented to the states in an atmosphere that greatly favored ratification. Sensible heads may prevail in today's Republican-controlled House, but don't count on it: On matters of electoral reform especially, congressmen have little stomach for resisting populist enthusiasms. A House that rolled over for McCain-Feingold, which enjoyed only mild public support, will not likely oppose the clamor for direct election. As for today's Senate, one would be hard pressed to identify a band of constitutional stalwarts comparable to those who courageously resisted popular currents in 1970. The next few years, in short, may test whether our nation has the patience or wisdom to preserve the delicate balances of our constitutional solar system.

Proponents of direct election indict those delicate balances for being "undemocratic." That is true only in the most superficial sense. If the Electoral College is undemocratic, so are federalism, the United States Senate, and the procedure for constitutional amendment. So is bicameralism and, for that matter, the separation of powers, which among other things authorizes an unelected judiciary. These constitutional devices were once widely understood to be the very heart and soul of the effort to form reasonable majorities. If all you care about is the achievement of mathematical equality in presidential elections, and if to achieve that goal you're willing to eliminate the states' role in presidential elections, what other "undemocratic" features of the Constitution are you also willing to destroy? And when you're done hacking your way through the Constitution, what guarantee can you give that your mathematically equal majorities can be restrained? How will you constrain the ambitions of presidents who claim to be the only authentic voice of the people?

The current system teaches us that the character of a majority is more important than its size alone. Americans ought to care about whether the winner's support is spread across a broad geographic area and a wide spectrum of interests. That is what enables presidents to govern more effectively—and what encourages them to govern more justly than they would if their majority were gathered from, say, an aggregation of heavy population centers. By ensuring that the winner's majority reflects the diversity of our uniquely federated republic, the current system also assures his opposition that it will not have to fear for its life, liberty, or property. Direct election can provide no such assurance and may, in fact, guarantee just the opposite. NR

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■ CAMPAIGN 2004

An Amazing Pass

One minute, we're talking about tolerance for homosexuals; the next, we're watching them marry

MIDGE DECTER

THE final weeks of the presidential campaign are filled with talk of homosexuality, specifically the vice president's daughter. Beyond and behind this, of course, is the recent sight of homosexual couples lining up to receive marriage licenses. How did it ever come to this, while most of the country was hoping not to have to pay attention?

Not so many years have passed between the moment that New Yorkers were both bemused and amused to learn that their city would have an annual softball game between the cops and the homosexuals, and the day when those couples lined up to receive their licenses. Not so many years, that is, for a cultural journey as vast as the one that took American society from the decision not to persecute homosexuals to the point of the enthusiastic embrace of them. The time seems especially brief considering that in the years between these two phenomena we saw the spread of a new—and hideous and fatal—disease that resulted from the corresponding spread of a kind of blind and heedlessly driven homosexual promiscuity.

At first, we may remember, denizens of the high culture, fearing that the new spirit of sexual enlightenment might be dampened by the news of this disease, AIDS, tried to tell us that everyone—homosexual and heterosexual alike—was in danger of being struck by the disease. It became a mark of high civic spirit to demand that the government devote whatever resources would prove to be necessary to finding a cure. When the claim that everyone was at risk turned out to be untrue—virtually the only heterosexuals in danger of contracting AIDS were careless intravenous drug-users (at least in the West)—a public show of deep compassion for—indeed the beatification of—those who were afflicted became the new propriety, if not, indeed, the new piety. AIDS was now to be seen as a cruel fate, like a lightning bolt, rather than the result of who knows how many nights and how many blind encounters in those so-exclusive bars and bathhouses. And to speak a word of truth in the face of all that very real suffering would have been considered insufferably cruel. So AIDS was duly given a place on the good people's list of injustices, where its real meaning could be overlooked.

After all, Americans in general are nice people, probably the nicest in the world, afraid of mean-spiritedness in others, and perhaps even more afraid of the accusation of being mean-spirited themselves. Now, it took them a long, long time to get around to dealing with their country's shameful conduct toward black people; and it is as if the shame of those years, indeed those centuries, of living comfortably with the crimes committed against the country's blacks has left them quite disarmed in the face of any and all charges of injustice or bigotry, whatever the merits. So it was, for instance, that the country was all too easily mobilized by a largely meretricious campaign to undo the alleged historic wrongs against women. (Insofar as women could rightly claim to be suffering from special disadvantages, nature itself had decreed them, after all, and it was only an unprecedented degree of national wealth combined with the wonders of medical technology that would make it possible to overcome them.) In any case, just as a group of militant women had piggy-backed their so-called cause onto that of the civil-rights revolution, so the homosexuals were almost inevitably next in line with a movement of their own.

No doubt they were within their rights to demand better manners of certain of their fellow citizens, though an angry pr movement with all the usual trappings w hardly necessary to achieve such a thing. No, something as easy to obtain from an already softened community as less bigoted treatment and greater sensitivity barely counted among the homosexuals' demands. They were loaded for bear.

What the movement wanted—beyond, of course, a cure for AIDS that would allow them once again to take up their formerly carefree lifestyle—was an official and unquestioning acknowledgment that how they comported themselves, sexually speaking, was no less normal a way of living than that engaged in by the "straight" community.

The movement wanted acknowledgment that how they comported themselves was no less normal a way of living than that engaged in by the 'straight' community.

And soon we began to see the results. For instance, a largely compliant community of tender-feeling folk sat by as the Boy Scouts were informed that they could no longer abide by their policy of disallowing homosexuals as scoutmasters. Sex-education curricula in the public schools (usually titled "Introduction to Family Life" or something similar) began to include instruction in the acceptance of homosexual "families" and their special sexual practices. And, traditionally at the forefront of sophisticated attitudes, New York City now boasts in its school system a high school specifically designated for homosexual kids. All, of course, in the name of tolerance for those formerly discriminated against. In some places, homosexuals were permitted—in some even encouraged—to adopt children: After all, is not a good and loving home better for a child than being left in an institution?

Today we have reached the point of debating the question of whether homosexuals may receive official community sanction for marrying. Such a logical outcome could have been predicted but wasn't, at least not by most of the people who had been wishing all these years merely to be kind and who had never imagined that common human decency would require them to bless homosexual marriage. Now they are left wondering what to do.

It may be too late to stop the onrushing

Midge Decter is the author, most recently, of *Rumsfeld: A Personal Portrait*, and her memoirs, *An Old Wife's Tale: My Seven Decades in Love and War*.

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tide, or it may not. The issue has thus far been placed in the hands of judges, and judges, as we know, have recently been deciding things on the basis not of law or even of what they take to be the public's welfare but only of their own personal feelings about things. On the other hand, new organizations have been formed to fight against the legitimation of "gay" marriage. Christian and Jewish religious leaders who still have faith in their own religious doctrines have declared their opposition. And many others have done so as well, including, of course, the president of the United States.

But the question remains: What of all those nice people who have played so important a role in allowing things to get this far? They have done so partly, as I said, because virtually anything proclaiming itself to be a matter of justice stirs their horror at the thought of being found unjust. But even more important is their reluctance to face up to what homosexuality means in practice. Whether homosexuals are born or made is a question that will not be decided, certainly not in our time and maybe not ever. Thus the idea that their being homosexual is *not their fault* provides a great temptation simply to have done with the issue altogether. It takes only a bit of turning one's head away to imagine that those pictures of the newly licensed happy couples, embracing and celebrating, are but for a small detail like any other wedding pictures. And in a time when marriages all around seem to be made and dissolved so casually, who is to say that these are not marriages like any others?

What people who are now given to this kind of resignation do not appear to understand is that the campaign to legalize homosexual marriage is not so much about homosexuals as about *them.* It is, as the kids say, the perfect and ultimate "in your face."

This is, to be sure, not so much the case with the lesbians, who anyway tend to engage in something akin to heterosexual marriage: that is, they tend to settle down, to stay together, and to be monogamous. They are women, and women are by nature monogamous, wishing to be mothers, for instance, and to bring up their children in stable households. But the movement for homosexual marriage is really not about them, though they are now taking part in it. The pleasure they express at the prospect of being "legalized" is merely an extension of the way they for the most part already feel.

The real issue here is with, and about, the men. For men are not by nature monogamous—it is women who make them so. And as the continuing spread of AIDS in such key homosexual centers as San Francisco attests, homosexuals are men whose natural promiscuousness has not been traded away to women in exchange for the comforts of home. There are, of course, homosexual men who have married women and made homes and fathered children with them. But the real sexual hunger in such men continues to be for other men, and is almost always acted upon. There have also been homosexual couples who have famously lived together for years and years, sometimes indeed for life, but what heterosexuals would define as marital loyalty has little or nothing to do with it. Indeed, a recent and scantly noted story in the press said that among the Massachusetts couples who had been granted wedding licenses the women said they intended to get married and most of the men said they didn't.

What, then, is the exercise for? It is for knocking the remaining pins out from under an already badly creaking culture, for being able to declare the unnatural natural, and for playing the final malicious joke out of a whole bagful of malicious jokes on all those people who want nothing more than to be able to account themselves compassionate.

Moreover, only the very innocent could imagine that this would be the end of it. For if society can by mere judicial fiat determine to overcome the distinction between heterosexuality and homosexuality, why can it not decide, then, to erase the sexual distinction between adults and children? After all, pedophiles, too, are human beings with human feelings; and who is to say that children who would enjoy their attentions are not entitled to? And after pedophilia, where will be found the truly telling argument against incest—especially since such issues, once left in the hands of God, now seem to have been thrown into the laps of judges? We may tremble at the outcome. **NR**

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Country at a Crossroads

November 2 will say a lot about the American people, and our future

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Had Lincoln lost the 1864 vote, a victorious General McClellan would have settled for an American continent divided, with slavery intact. Without Woodrow Wilson's reelection in 1916—opposed by the isolationists—Western Europe would have lost millions only to be trampled by Prussian militarism. Franklin Roosevelt's interventionism saved liberal democracy. And without the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan and his unpopular agenda for remaking the military, the Soviet Union might still be subsidizing global murder.

This election marks a similar crossroads in our history. We are presented with two radically different candidates with profound disagreements about how to conduct a historic worldwide war. We should remember that all our victorious past presidents were, at the moments of their crises, deeply unpopular precisely because they chose the difficult, long-term sacrifice for victory over the expedient and convenient pleas for accommodation (if not outright capitulation). We are faced with just such an option today: a choice between a president whose call for patience and sacrifice promises victory, and a pessimist stirring the people with the assurances that we should not have fought, and now cannot win, the present war in Iraq.

Our terrorist enemy has no uniforms or aircraft, but nevertheless struck at the very heart of our financial and political capitals in a fashion unimaginable by Nazi Germany, Tojo's Japan, or the Soviet Union. The Islamic fascists' creed is Hitlerian, their methodology primeval. Their aim is not mere territory: They want nothing less than the destruction of Western freedom, through the takeover of the Middle East and the use of its petroleum wealth to craft a nuclear, global caliphate, Dark Aged in its values, 21st-century in its lethality.

This war against Islamic fascism is now a quarter-century old, and began with the Iranian seizure of the American embassy in 1979; the apex of this escalating assault—owing to past American neglect and appeasement—was September 11. Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and John Kerry—so unlike their Democratic predecessors FDR, Harry Truman, and John Kennedy—have seen the struggle not as one for national survival, but at best as the lamentable dividend of inequality or poverty, and at worst as the felonious behavior of a few miscreants who seem to eat, sleep, and bank in the upper air rather than in the houses and streets of real countries. Thus arose John Kerry's revealing use of "sensitive" and "nuisance" to suggest that we need to return either to writs and indictments or the occasional cruise missile—i.e., the status quo before the world changed on 9/11.

The reaction of George W. Bush could not be more different. He accepts the conflict as a global war of ideas against states that harbor terrorists. He recognizes it as a struggle that involves millions in the Middle East, people who will reluctantly join bullying fascists should they have any premonitions of American inaction (much less defeat or Madrid-style capitulation). Bush's aim is not merely to defeat the terrorists today, but to eradicate them and isolate their supporters through a bold tripartite strategy. It is as breathtakingly simple as it is logical: kill or capture the al-Qaeda purveyors of death; end renegade regimes, such as the Taliban or Saddam Hussein's Iraq, that have a long history of subsidizing terrorists; and promote democratic reform in the Middle East. The push for such liberalization rests on the theory that democracies rarely go to war against their own kind—and, more important, that democracies marginalize religious extrem-

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ists internally by free discussion over, and collective responsibility for, solving national problems.

By any historical standard, the Bush doctrine is working. In just over three years, the Taliban and Saddam Hussein have been eradicated. Consensual societies are starting to emerge in their place. Syria and Iran are jittery, fearing new global scrutiny over their longstanding, but heretofore excused, terrorist sympathies. Libya and Pakistan have flipped, renouncing much of their past villainy. Saudi Arabia and the other autocracies of the Gulf region feel the new pressure of American idealism. For all their vocal resentment, strategically critical sheikdoms are inching toward political reform and terrorist-hunting.

BUSH'S PROBLEMS

Bush's popularity problems, however, are threefold, and explain the present divisions in this country over the war. First, this is an election year in the postmodern age. Two- and three-minute media streams from the battlefield are delivered with amateurish editorializing in real time to American living rooms, and are then recycled as political soundbites. Given both the wealth and security of American society, and the spectacular ability of our military to defeat enemies at minimal costs, Americans have come to claim as their birthright automatic victory without casualties. To a country that lost hundreds an hour at the Bulge and Iwo Jima, 1,000 fatalities in three years to liberate 50 million people 7,000 miles away might seem an amazing achievement; but 60 years later, voters of a far richer society, inundated with political commercials showing the missing limbs or flag-draped coffins of a few, are told that any sacrifice is tantamount to failure. We have forgotten that in war there are always setbacks like looting, Fallujah, Abu Ghraib, or the rise of a Zarqawi—but that the key is determining to what degree such reversals impair the overall success of the war. So far in Iraq, they simply do not, despite the media sensationalism.

Second, the president's forte is direct action and singular resolve, not Churchillian oratory. Yet because of the stealthy nature of our enemy—and owing to decades of multiculturalism, utopian pacifism, and moral equivalence in our schools and popular culture—the American people are confused about the nature of the enemy. Are we really threatened with another 9/11? Cannot allies and aid preclude our further military action? Are we overreacting, captive to religious, racial, or cultural chauvinism? Does war ever solve problems? Bush must remind Americans almost daily that the threat is real, that we are winning a necessary war, and that the outlook is bright. And he must do so in such a fashion as to drown out far more glib legions of political junkies, National Public Radio "experts," the *New York Times*, and most of Hollywood.

Third, after the meteoric rise of Howard Dean's boutique anti-war campaign in the Democratic primary season, both John Kerry and John Edwards retracted their prior Trumanesque bipartisan support of the war. Instead they sensed political capital in equating daily images of Americans killed with everything from alleged Halliburton profiteering to tax cuts for the wealthy. Their efforts have been energized by millions of dollars in third-party contributions, and sensationalized by the American elite in the arts, universities, and media, who are as culturally influential as they are politically weak and envious.

Indeed, precisely because the Democrats have lost the House, the Senate, the presidency, and perhaps soon the Supreme Court, they realized that the very future of the party and its liberal vision were on the line. Distortions about the war were therefore legitimate, if they achieved the necessary end of stopping the Republican tide. Thus we were treated to Senator Kennedy's bombast that the war had been "cooked up" in Texas, Howard Dean's hinting that George Bush might have known about September 11 in advance, and the Kerry campaign's atrocious slur that the battle-scarred Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi, after addressing a joint session of Congress, was little more than an administration puppet.

A Kerry presidency would not be a setback for our present winning strategy; it would be an unmitigated disaster.

WHAT KERRY PORTENDS

A Kerry presidency would not be a setback for our present winning strategy; it would be an unmitigated disaster. Why such a pessimistic appraisal? First, Kerry's own rhetoric has been abjectly defeatist, if not Orwellian. He promises to bring allies into a war he smears as having been waged in the wrong place, at the wrong time. He broadcasts in advance a timetable for withdrawal. His present positions are at odds with his own past votes to support the Iraq operation, which he has alternately praised and demeaned depending on the ephemeral news from the battlefield and its immediate impact on polling.

Senator Kerry also has a disturbing record of opposing America's past armed struggles, as both a soldier and a senator, in the midst of hostilities. He returned from Vietnam to allege war atrocities against his fellow soldiers in the field, and met with enemy North Vietnamese representatives in Paris. During the first Gulf War, he voted against authorization even as troops were mobilizing in the desert sands to expel Saddam Hussein. Had Kerry's position won out, Saddam would now have nuclear weapons and over 20 percent of the world's oil reserves, and be idolized as the legendary Saladin come alive to the Arab Street. Even as we witness the first national vote in Afghanistan in 5,000 years, a brave Prime Minister Allawi steering his country toward elections, and unyielding Australians reelecting their war president in a landslide vote, a President Kerry would revert to his default of opposing further military efforts even as they are nearing victory.

Third, John Kerry has a telltale record of voting against most

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of the major weapons systems—bombers, tanks, and missiles—that are presently critical to the American military. Had his naïve visions trumped Ronald Reagan's realism, the United States would not have had the military wherewithal to convince Mikhail Gorbachev that further armed Soviet resistance was futile and suicidal, and we could have won neither the first Gulf War nor the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

During his current campaign, almost every criticism Kerry has voiced against the war has been crassly opportunistic, puerile, or bordering on the unhinged. Contrary to Kerry's belief, a country that defeated Germany, Japan, and Italy with a handful of allies really can fight al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein at the same time. Thus Kerry's own running mate, John Edwards, was quite right when he assured Democratic primary voters of the need to fight both the terrorists and Saddam: "I believe that this is not an either/or choice. Our national security requires us to do both, and we can."

Saddam Hussein harbored legions of terrorists. Kurdistan was a haven for al-Qaeda offshoots. The infamous Zarqawi was welcomed to Saddam's hospitals, and Iraqi intelligence had disturbing ties to the architects of the first World Trade Center bombing. Yet to say, as John Kerry does, that there was no connection between a fascistic Iraq and Middle East terrorism—and thus no need to remove Saddam—is not only counterintuitive and disingenuous, but also at odds with his own previous pronouncements that "it was the right decision to disarm Saddam Hussein. And when the president made the decision, I supported him, and I support the fact that we did disarm him."

Kerry the Multilateralist has derided the current coalition of willing nations as either bought or impotent—and yet promises to bring Germany and France, both countries lacking the resolve and loyalty of our present allies, into a war that neither he nor they support. By definition, his own antiwar rhetoric promises to preclude future help and erodes the resolve of our present comrade-states in arms. He claims that we let Osama bin Laden escape from Tora Bora (although at the time he praised the operation)—even though there has never been proof that Osama was actually trapped in Tora Bora. He repeats this canard endlessly, despite the fact that American commanders on the ground believed that the sudden influx of thousands of American troops into the high mountains of Afghanistan would not have changed the outcome of that successful campaign, and, indeed, might have impaired it.

On other strategic issues, Kerry's judgment is equally disturbing. He once complained about American troops' being unnecessarily based in Germany and Korea, only to criticize the president for taking the bold and long-overdue steps to begin withdrawing them. He claims that President Bush abruptly alienated the world—although Greeks publicly booed us on September 11, Palestinians danced, and European intellectuals wrote that it was warranted. That India, Russia, Japan, China, Britain, and Australia are closer than ever to the United States means little, so attuned is Senator Kerry to tired European voices of envy and resentment and Europeans' long appeasement of Middle East roguery. We heard from Democrats that the war was for cheap petroleum and that our oilmen were conniving to hijack the natural resources of other peoples; then, when prices skyrocketed, they screamed that President Bush must now stand up for the American driver and castigate out-of-control, conniving Middle Eastern producers. Are we sinister and calculating, or naïve? Kerry chides the president for inaction in the Middle East, but the bold ostracism of Yasser Arafat, the overdue construction of an Israeli fence, the needed destruction of Hamas masterminds, and the proposed withdrawal from Gaza have led to a decrease in violence, the marginalization of extremists, and the hope for democratic reform in the West Bank.

In sum, a Kerry presidency will lack either the vision or the resolve to finish the war, resulting in a defeat for the United States in Iraq—with calamitous consequences for the brave reformers there, an end to liberal momentum in the Middle East, a reversal in the conduct of Libya, Pakistan, and the Gulf, and assurance to Syria, Lebanon, and Iran that the United States is conducting not war but a criminal investigation akin to efforts against gambling or prostitution. Chamberlain-like, we will return to the complacency of the pre-9/11 days, regarding the telltale signs of the destruction to come as mere "nuisances." All the hysterical invective of John Kerry's surrogates—like George Soros, Michael Moore, Terry McAuliffe, and Teresa Heinz Kerry—cannot change that bleak and depressing fact. **NR**

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■ **CAMPAIGN 2004**

Lies, Damned Lies, and Journalists

Who's telling the biggest whoppers?

RAMESH PONNURU

MARK HALPERIN, the political director of ABC News, became the center of a minor tempest when an internal memo of his leaked to the Drudge Report. The memo, dated October 8, said that the Bush campaign was telling more, and bigger, lies than the Kerry campaign:

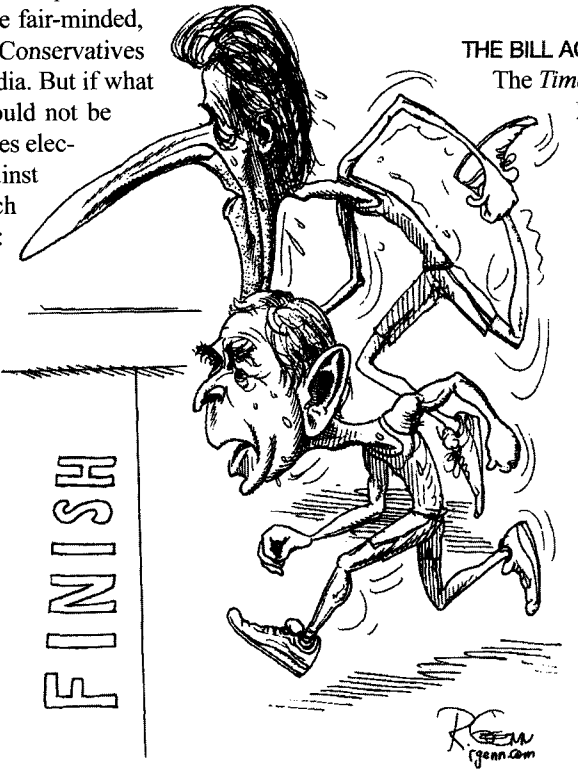
> The New York Times (Nagourney/Stevenson) and Howard Fineman on the web both make the same point today: the current Bush attacks on Kerry involve distortions and taking things out of context in a way that goes beyond what Kerry has done. Kerry distorts, takes out of context, and [makes] mistakes all the time, but these are not central to his efforts to win. We have a responsibility to hold both sides accountable to the public interest, but that doesn't mean we reflexively and artificially hold both sides "equally" accountable when the facts don't warrant that.

In Halperin's memo, both sides, equally, found their prejudices confirmed. Left-wingers saw in it further proof that President Bush is a shameless liar: The fair-minded, objective observers at ABC said so. Conservatives grimly noted the liberal bias of the media. But if what Halperin said was true, his memo would not be proof of bias. Surely there are sometimes elections that pit dishonest Republicans against relatively upstanding Democrats. In such cases, Halperin would be quite right: The press should not pretend that both campaigns are playing politics the same way. So the question is, Is Bush in fact being more deceptive than Kerry?

Halperin spoke for most of the press corps in saying yes. That is especially true of the most influential political reporters, such as the ones he mentioned: Adam Nagourney and Richard Stevenson of the *New York Times* and Howard Fineman of *Newsweek*. Bush faces a media environment similar to the one his father faced in 1992. That year, journalists felt that they had to make up for letting the president get away in the previous election with a demagogic campaign about issues they deemed to be fake (such as Michael Dukakis's record on the Pledge of Allegiance and prison furloughs). This year, they feel they were too hard on Al Gore for what they now regard as minor distortions, and let Bush get away with misleading promises about his budget and other matters. Many journalists seem also to think that they should scrutinize Bush especially closely because of the Swift-boat ads, which they regard as a dirty trick. (This impulse may have been what led to CBS's disgrace.)

The Halperin memo presented no evidence of Bush's lies other than what appeared in the *Newsweek* and *New York Times* stories. *Newsweek*'s Fineman suggests that Bush's past claims about Iraqi WMD and links to terrorism have now been discredited, leaving him with "only one argument and justification for having launched a war that has cost 1,000 lives, $150 billion and whatever goodwill America had won in the aftermath of 9/11. His last-resort reason: Saddam Hussein might have developed weapons that he might have given to terrorists that might attack the United States. And even that reasoning is undermined by the new report of the Iraq Survey Group, which says that Saddam's capacities, whatever they might have been, were withering, not 'gathering,' under the weight of inspections."

Whatever else Fineman is doing here, it isn't straight reporting. That Iraq was a sponsor of terrorism is not seriously denied; only the magnitude of its involvement is disputed. It is not the case that Bush has only one argument left for the Iraq war: He also regularly argues that the war was necessary to give liberty a foothold in the Middle East, which in turn was necessary to promote American interests there. And Fineman's analysis of the Iraq Survey Group report does not consider the possibility that without the Iraq war, the sanctions would eventually have disappeared and Saddam would have re-armed. If Bush has lied, Fineman doesn't establish it.



ROMAN GENN

THE BILL AGAINST BUSH

The *Times*men make several additional charges. Let's deal with them one by one.

First, they say that Bush wrongly accuses Kerry of giving other countries a veto over our defense, when Kerry has explicitly denied that he would do this. Many other commentators have tagged Bush for this. But why should Bush take Kerry's denial at face value? Kerry's rhetoric on multilateralism makes no sense unless he is willing to let foreign opposition keep him from taking actions he would otherwise take. Presumably there are circumstances in which Bush, too, would let foreign opposition stay his hand; but presumably Bush thinks that Kerry would defer too much, so much that his policy could be described as giving other countries a veto over our defense. That's a legitimate argument for the president to make—every bit as legiti-

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mate as Kerry's saying that Bush doesn't care about world opinion even when he says he does.

Second, they say that Bush wrongly characterizes Kerry's health-care plan as a government takeover. The plan, they claim, "would not create any big new federal bureaucracy." Bush's critics have half a point here; the president has overstated the case against Kerry's plan. Kerry does not propose the kind of government-run health care that Canada and Great Britain have. His plan would, however, substantially expand the federal role in health care. Kerry's plan would give health coverage to millions of people; the vast majority of them, as Bush noted in the third presidential debate, would get it through Medicaid, a federal program. Would that mean that Kerry puts "big government in charge," and "not you" or "your doctor," as a Bush ad claimed? Yes, potentially, even probably. People commonly say that HMOs are interfering with medical decisions when they decide what to pay for. Under Kerry's plan the federal government would have to make such decisions, too. Over time, Kerry's plan could well lead to a Canadian-style system. But we'll be strict and count this against Bush.

Third, the *Times* says that Bush wrongly accuses Kerry of setting "artificial timetables" for leaving Iraq when Kerry has really said that he would withdraw troops in six months only if the country had been stabilized. In other words, Kerry has raised the expectation that the country might be stabilized within six months of his taking office, and that troops might then be withdrawn. That sure sounds like setting an artificial timetable to me.

Fourth, the *Times* criticizes Bush for saying that Kerry has pledged to raise taxes. Kerry has pledged not to raise taxes on the middle class, the *Times* points out—just on the rich. Which means, Kerry has pledged to raise taxes. Bush cut income taxes across the board. Kerry claims to favor the middle-class tax cuts in Bush's bills, but he voted against the bills nonetheless. That's fair game. While it's true that "Mr. Bush has often left out facts that might make some of the Democrat's positions look [better]," that is an absurdly high standard to hold any politician to. It is certainly not one the *Times* applies to Kerry.

Fifth, Bush is criticized for saying that Kerry voted for a law that contributed to recent increases in Medicare premiums. The *Times* doesn't really dispute the point, but merely says that Republicans voted for that law, too, and that Bush has not called for its repeal. Now it's the *Times* that is omitting facts that might make Bush look better. Kerry struck first, holding Bush responsible for the premium increase. Bush responded that Kerry had voted for the law—and he was right.

And that's it. By my generous count, the *Times*, *Newsweek*, and Halperin have identified one place where Bush has stretched the truth (on Kerry's health-care plan). There are, however, other examples that these journalists could have adduced. Bush keeps saying that Kerry has voted 98 times to raise taxes. That's an overstatement. Half of those votes were for budgets that assumed tax increases, but did not actually raise taxes themselves. The number is also misleading because it counts multiple votes for the same bill. Bush has often exaggerated the number of small businesses that would be hit by Kerry's tax hikes.

Are these damning examples? Let's look at the other side of the ledger, at Kerry's lies and distortions.

A LONGER NOSE

Kerry has frequently said that Bush has "banned" stem-cell research. That's not true. Bush has called for a ban on one kind of stem-cell research: the kind that involves cloning. But he has imposed no legal restrictions on private-sector stem-cell research using embryos taken from fertility clinics, and has even provided federal funding for some such research.

Kerry often accuses Bush of breaking his promise on education funding. That claim is, at best, seriously misleading. The No Child Left Behind Act reauthorized (and altered) several federal education programs. As usual, it "authorized" spending levels for those programs. It is true that actual funding, while increasing at a very rapid pace, has not reached the "authorized" levels. But nobody expected it to do so. Authorized levels are spending caps, not spending promises. The last time the programs were reauthorized, in 1994, by a Democratic Congress, actual spending fell short of the authorized level.

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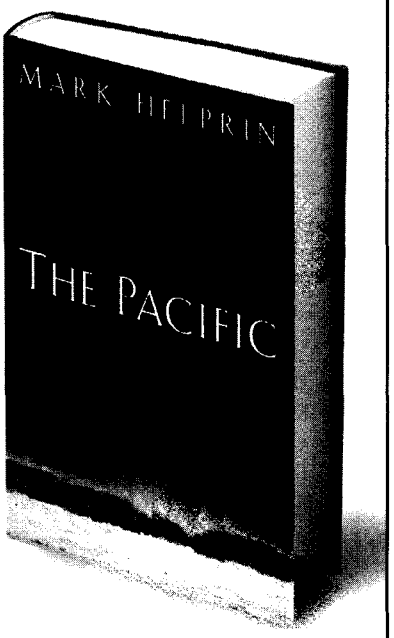

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Nobody made an issue of it. The idea that a "promise" was broken is a Democratic invention.

In the second presidential debate, Kerry strongly implied that his objection to parental-notification laws was that girls who have been raped by their fathers should not have to report abortions to their rapists. It was a misleading comment, since Kerry has voted against parental-notification bills that included exceptions for such cases.

Kerry also said during the debates that Bush's Social Security plan would cut benefits—and that the Congressional Budget Office had "very clearly" said so. But Bush has promised that he would not cut benefits for current retirees, which ought to be relevant under the media's standard on the foreign-veto question. Moreover, the CBO didn't say what Kerry claimed it did. It evaluated one Social Security plan—which Bush has not said he would try to enact—and found that under an extremely unlikely set of circumstances the plan would result in benefit cuts. (The assumptions were that taxes were left unchanged, private investment of Social Security funds did not raise returns, and the entire fiscal shortfall of the program had to be solved. In other words, it assumed massive benefit cuts.) The CBO didn't exaggerate its own findings. Kerry did that.

Are Social Security, education, and stem cells not sufficiently "important" issues for Halperin and company? If not, how about the economy? Surely it is one of the top two issues in the election.

Kerry has often said that we have lost 1.6 million jobs under President Bush. Kerry is counting only private-sector figures, without saying so; count public-sector figures and the number drops almost by half. (Mind you, I'm not happy about the private sector's shrinkage and the public sector's expansion. But Kerry's statement is false.) At the Democratic convention and elsewhere, Kerry has said that the jobs now being created by the economy pay, on average, $9,000 less than the ones we have lost. Kerry is relying on a study by a union-affiliated think tank that finds expanding industries pay less than shrinking ones, on average. Look at the data on occupations within industries, and a different picture emerges. Average earnings, meanwhile, have increased under Bush.

Then there's the draft. Kerry and John Edwards have assiduously promoted the idea that Bush would bring back the draft in his second term. Bush and other Republicans strenuously deny this. The only evidence Kerry adduces is that the military is overstretched. Basically, Kerry is promoting an urban legend. Is it an "important" issue? Both the Democrats and the Republicans seem to think it could sway a lot of voters.

Some reporters have taken Kerry to task on the stem-cell "ban." Almost nobody has called him on his distortions on education, the economy, and Social Security. As of mid-October, he has taken almost no heat in the press over the draft lie. At least "The Note," a daily political newsletter produced by ABC and thus overseen by Halperin, has recently retreated somewhat from Halperin's claim that Bush is uniquely dishonest. But his memo still expresses the view of most national political reporters.

All political campaigns involve some distortions, and all too often they involve lies. But Bush has been at least as sinned against as sinning. In claiming otherwise—and in applying unacknowledged double standards—the biggest liars in this campaign are the men and women of the media. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2004**

The Democrats' Fantasy Island

Where they will be if they lose

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

With the race tightening in the final stretch, Democrats have begun to believe—for the first time since the Boston convention—that Kerry really will win. Their spirits are rising, their "get out the illegals" drives in full swing, their lawyers primed and ready. But what if they lose again after all? Few Democrats have been prepared to discuss this awful prospect in public. That is partly for reasons of decorum and partly because Kerry may well win—and where would the pessimistic strategist be then? But there are occasional brave cases of men who will put their future where their mouth is.

Todd Gitlin, professor of journalism and sociology at Columbia University, is one such. Writing in a recent issue of *The Washington Monthly*, he explored what the Left would and should do after a Kerry defeat. His argument was, essentially, that left-wingers should imitate the Goldwater conservatives after 1964 and embark on a long march through the institutions of the Democratic party. "Many of the young go-for-broke voters," Gitlin said, "having failed to change the world in their first electoral outing, will be tempted to paint themselves into a gaudy Naderite corner . . . some of the far left will yield to fury, sullenness and despair. The Greens will recruit." These futile ideological gestures will make future defeats even more likely.

Others may be lured into still worse activities. Let Gitlin spell it out with the sympathetic understanding of a political ally: "I would not be surprised to see outbursts of political violence the likes of which we haven't seen since the Weather Underground of the 1970s. The commitment to marginality in much of the anti-globalization movement would take on a tang of negative logic. The master argument will go like this: What else you got, you so-called practical types?"

Well, I couldn't have put it better myself. Not being a sociologist as well as a journalist, I would never have noticed that the movement's commitment to marginality had a tang of negative logic to it. How on earth did that happen?

Also, I cannot help observing—in my partisan, mean-minded way—that it is almost impossible to imagine the mirror-image of Gitlin's article being written by someone on the right. Imagine Ralph Reed or Bob Bork predicting that if Bush were to lose, then it would sadly be impossible to restrain the Young Republicans from supporting David Duke, joining the Michigan Militia, or blowing up the headquarters of the Handgun Control Coalition. And if either of them were to lose his marbles to the extent of writ-

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ing such an article, it would be a major news story. He would be disowned on the right, excoriated on the left, and mentioned hourly on the news networks.

But we have different standards for judging the greedy careerists of conservatism and the young idealists of the Left. We all take it for granted that the Right will accept its defeats and work to reverse them politically, while even the Left fears that its own activists regard democracy as a disposable tactic to be abandoned for more direct action if it produces the wrong result.

So what will happen to the Democrats and the Left if Kerry does lose on November 2? There would initially be a burst of historical incomprehension. Leftists feel that 2004 is 1968 all over again—but with one wonderful difference. They are not facing an evil genius like Richard Nixon, but a bumbling dimwit in George W. Bush. Their mood is based on the philosophical question: "How can we possibly lose to this guy?" So if they do lose, they will feel especially cheated.

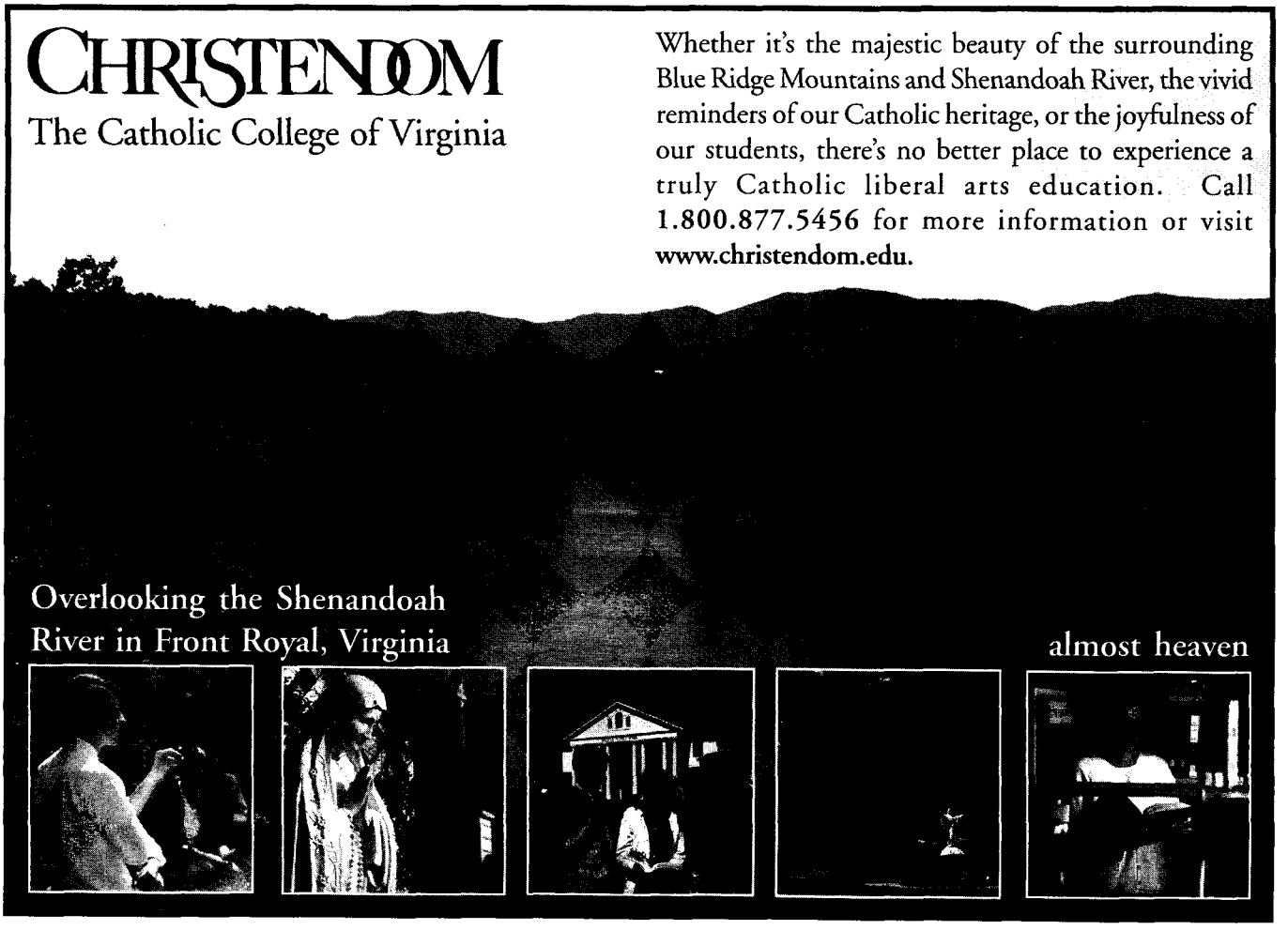
For anyone who remembers the 1980s, however, it's déjà vu all over again. Reagan too was contemptuously written off in the 1980 campaign as a dangerous dimwit. A cartoon of the period shows a Samaritan gently counseling an elephant not to end everything; but even after all his good advice, the elephant replies: "It's no use, I'm going to nominate Reagan." Reagan duly won and the Democrats spent twelve years in the wilderness.

To be fair to them, they remained sane and nominated a series of respectable, practical types in the next three contests. They were obliged to adopt this prudent course by two factors. Democrats controlled some or all of Congress for those twelve years—a strong disincentive to anything that smacked of revolution. And the party was recovering from its turbulent flirtation with the far Left in 1968 and 1972. Not only had that flirtation led to those two major defeats—one a landslide—but it had also provoked constant and bitter faction-fighting in the party. Many Democrats simply wanted a rest. Today, they are in a different—and less quietist—mood.

MRS. T. AND ALL THAT

A better example from the 1980s is Britain in Mrs. Thatcher's first term. Not only the Left regarded her economic and labor-union reforms as extreme, radical, un-British, and outside the mainstream: The political center and even "wet" Tories thought the same thing. By 1981-83, the Labour Left was happily confident that Thatcher was doomed electorally—irrespective of what they did. "How can we possibly lose to this girl?" they asked themselves. So they decided it was quite safe for them to go mad. The so-called practical types threw in their lot with what became known as "the loony Left." They elected the decent but left-liberal Michael Foot as their leader, and adopted an "alternative economic strategy" of nationalization and protectionism. They duly lost the 1983 election and the subsequent two as well.

In modern societies, however, electoral victories and control of government are not the whole of political power. Throughout the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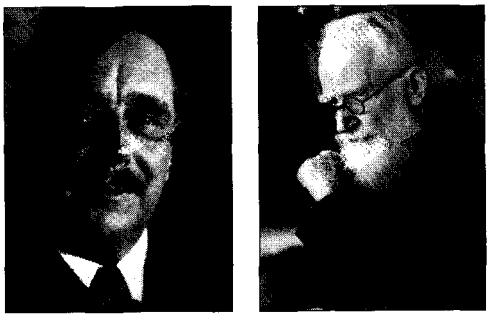
period of Thatcherite "hegemony" in Britain, as today in the United States, the Left was the overwhelmingly dominant force in cultural institutions, including the BBC and London's excellent subsidized theater. Hence, when it went mad, the Left was able to preserve and broadcast its skewed view of reality through these and other outlets. No London theater went for long in those days without a play that showed Mrs. Thatcher eating a baby or Queen Victoria (these two women were indistinguishable to the Left) sodomizing an African chieftain.

Nor was more popular culture neglected. There was a series of commercial thrillers that depicted Britain as a country governed by a sinister secret coalition of right-wing Tories, MI6, and "the Americans." This trend reached its apogee with *A Very British Coup*, a television thriller (based on the lively novel by Chris Mullin, now a Labour MP) in which the Tory-MI6-U.S. coalition seeks to bring down an elected left-wing Labour government that is implementing an "alternative economic strategy." The bad guys almost succeed by fomenting an artificial financial crisis. Fortunately, the canny prime minister obtains a generous loan from the Soviet Union to move Britain towards full socialism. Moscow Gold saves the day!

What was absurd about this cultural propaganda is not that it was invariably left-wing. George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells both wrote their plays and novels in order to persuade people that socialism was a better way of organizing society than capitalism. (Socialism did not then exist to refute them.) But they gave their capitalists a fair crack of the rhetorical whip. Undershaft, the arms manufacturer in *Major Barbara*, wins all the arguments. And in *The New Machiavelli* Wells not only presents a fair-minded picture of Edwardian politics but even has his hero turn Tory (for good socialist reasons, of course).



They don't make socialist propagandists like they used to.

Because they are rooted in reality, the works of Shaw and Wells are dramatically powerful and politically persuasive almost a hundred years later. What rendered the cultural propaganda of the '80s British Left manifestly fake and ultimately ridiculous was that it was a comforting retreat into fantasy. *A Very British Coup* was broadcast at the very moment when Thatcherite Britain was booming and the Soviet Union economically collapsing. History in this instance trumped culture, and Tony Blair drew the appropriate lesson. Only by shaking off the illusions of the Left "narrative" and replacing it with a more realistic New Labour one—which accepted the essence of Thatcherite economic policy—was Blair able to make his party electable again.

MANCHURIAN CANDIDATES

All the signs are that, if Bush does win in November, the American Left will—in addition to supporting Nader, rioting, blowing themselves up, etc.—retreat onto the same political Fantasy Island. Having beached their coracles there, they will win elections, expose Halliburton, uncover the bribery that induced the U.S. Supreme Court to steal Florida, discover the intelligence reports finally proving that "Bush Lied," and so on. Michael Moore's popularity is one index of their lust for comforting lies: *Fahrenheit 9/11* was the first documentary for which the audience is asked to suspend reality. Hollywood has already signified its willingness to meet the demands of the ideological market with films like *The Day After Tomorrow* and the remake of *The Manchurian Candidate*.

These movies, and others like them, mix fantasy with a documentary-like reality. They set recognizable political figures and actual controversies in a hazy alternative universe of wild conspiracies and dark forces. Thus, in *The Day After Tomorrow*, a Vice President Cheney look-alike is held responsible for starting a worldwide flood that makes Noah's Ark seem like an afternoon's row on the lake.

The 1962 *Manchurian Candidate* was a brilliant paranoid satire of McCarthyism as a convoluted Communist bid for power. Though the broad concept was highly improbable—to say the least—its logical implications were worked out quite consistently. Thus, the Kremlin plans to win the Cold War by putting its agent (Angela Lansbury), outwardly the wife of a Joe McCarthy look-alike, in control of the White House by making her husband a vice-presidential candidate and then assassinating his running mate. But when they also make her own son the brainwashed assassin, she turns against Moscow (as most mothers would). And when a Communist psychiatrist orders her brainwashed GI son to kill his best friend, he does so to show the effectiveness of brainwashing to a skeptical KGB. (It convinces them.) All in all, highly unlikely, but a rattling good tale.

The remake is based on the theory that U.S. politics is entirely run by a sinister corporation that seems to be a blend of Halliburton and the Blackstone Group. It is this Manchurian Corporation that seeks to plant its own agent in the White House by using a brainwashed Gulf War veteran to assassinate the president. Why it takes such great risks and uses such a roundabout method when it already controls everything else in Washington is not at all clear. Its female agent—now a right-wing senator played by Meryl Streep as a blonde Elizabeth Dole—is not annoyed by the fact that her son has been transformed into the brainwashed assassin. In fact, she thought up the idea in the first place. And when the psychiatrist (now a South African geneticist and war criminal) orders him to kill his best friend, it is for no reason whatsoever—except perhaps to show that white South Africans are almost as nasty as the corporations they work for.

Yet this incomprehensible nonsense got rave reviews. *The Nation*'s critic was especially complimentary about its realistic portrait of an America in which we are all subjected to constant electronic brainwashing. Terrorism, by the way, is happening all the time throughout the movie, but it is tacitly assumed to be a trivial matter compared with Halliburton-Blackstone's sinister manipulations.

Maybe a victorious Republican party should happily accept the Democratic Left's indulging its revolutionary fantasies on the large and small screens—provided, as Mrs. Patrick Campbell said, they don't do it in the streets and frighten the horses. Unfortunately, as Professor Gitlin obligingly warns us, that is exactly what some of them may do. **NR**

H.G. WELLS & GEORGE BERNARD SHAW/HULTON GETTY

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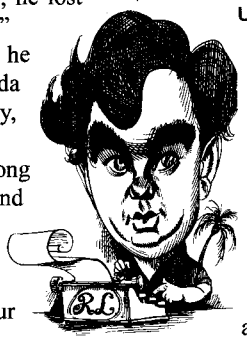
the long view

ROB LONG

NSA Surveillance Records

EXTRACT 1: 11/02/04 23:47 EST

[cellphone static]
[background noise]
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #1: "Hello?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #2: "We're all wondering when your candidate is going to have the grace and good taste to concede."
UMV#1: "Concede? He's not going to concede. There have been voting irregularities and . . ."
UMV#2: "C'mon! He lost Ohio, he lost Florida, he lost Michigan . . ."
UMV#1: "He *maybe* lost Ohio, he may have *actually won* Florida and Michigan . . . well, okay, you get Michigan."
UMV#2: "C'mon! It's been a long night. Just do the right thing and get it over with. You know you lost. Ohio, Florida . . . c'mon. The networks are about to call the thing for our guy."



UMV#1: "Networks? As in plural?"
UMV#2: "Well, Fox."
UMV#1: "Gimme a break."
UMV#2: "It's over, okay? Give it up!"
UMV#1: "See you in court."

EXTRACT 2: 11/03/04 00:13 EST

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE #1: "Sioux City DoubleTree Suites Hotel, good evening, may I help you, please?"
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE #2: "I'd like to reserve some rooms, please."
UFV#1: "Certainly, ma'am, I'll connect you to room reservations."
[Unidentified hold music]
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #1: "Reservations, this is Sanjay, may I help you?"
UFV#2: "I'd like to reserve some rooms please."
UMV#1: "Certainly, ma'am. For which dates?"
UFV#2: "From January 2007 to January 2008."
UMV#1: "We are showing availability for those dates. May I ask how many rooms you're wishing to reserve?"
UFV#2: "26."
UMV#1: "Certainly, ma'am. That's 26 rooms in our Sioux City, Iowa, property for one year. May I have the name as it appears on the credit card?"
UFV#2: "Last name is Rodham. First name, Hillary."
UMV#1: "Any other names?"
UFV#2: "Nope."
UMV#1: "Okay then, Ms. Rodham, you're all set. Is there anything else I can help you with?"
UFV#2: "Could you tell me about your New Hampshire properties?"

EXTRACT 3: 11/03/04 01:39 EST

[cellphone static]
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #1: "Hello?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #2: "When are you guys going to concede?"
UMV#1: "Please! An hour ago I was calling you and asking the same question."
UMV#2: "Look, I admit it looked bad for our guy an hour ago. But some new figures have come in and it looks like we're going to make it in Ohio and Pennsylvania. I don't see how your guy pulls it out."
UMV#1: "What new figures! You guys are bluffing! This is fantasyland stuff. Our numbers have held all day. You guys are just whistling past the graveyard."
UMV#2: "Our guy is going to win Florida."
UMV#1: "Says who?"
UMV#2: "All of the networks are putting it in our column."
UMV#1: "All of them? *All*?"
UMV#2: "Well, CBS."
UMV#1: "See you in court!"

EXTRACT 4: 11/03/04 02:45 EST

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE #1: "Good morning, the Inn at Manchester, New Hampshire, may I help you?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #1: "Yes, thank you, ma'am. I'd like to make a reservation if I could, please."
UFV#1: "Certainly, sir. For which dates?"
UMV#1: "How about from next week to, oh, about four years from then?"
UFV#1: "Certainly, sir. That's one room . . ."
UMV#1: "Better make it ten rooms."
UFV#1: "Okay, ten rooms for roughly four years, is that correct?"
UMV#1: "That's right, ma'am."
UFV#1: "And the name?"
UMV#1: "Put 'em all under Frist. That's F as in Frank . . ."
UFV#1: "Yes, senator. I know how to spell it. We've been expecting you."

EXTRACT 5: 11/03/04 04:29 EST

[cellphone static]
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #1: "Hello?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #2: "Now can we all get some rest?"
UMV#1: "We have no plans to concede at this time. There have been irregularities, and allegations of fraud, and . . ."
UMV#2: "Oh, come on! It's over, okay? You guys lost Florida, Ohio, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania . . ."
UMV#1: "Pennsylvania is for the courts to decide."
UMV#2: "So, basically, you're saying that even though it's clear to everyone that you've lost, your guy isn't willing to concede?"
UMV#1: "Clear to everyone?"
UMV#2: "It's all over Drudge. And the bloggers have called it for my guy!"
UMV#1: "The bloggers? You have got to be kidding me."
UMV#2: "So you're saying, I'm not getting any sleep for the next six weeks?"
UMV#1: "I'm saying it's up to the courts to decide."
UMV#2: "No, what you're saying is that your guy's insane."
UMV#1: "I'm saying that I'll see you in court."

EXTRACT 6: 11/03/04 07:42 EST

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE #1: "Thank you for calling the Sioux City Guest-Quarters Extended Stay Suites and Lodge. May I help you?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #1: "I'd like to book a whole bunch of rooms, if I could."
UFV#1: "Certainly, sir, for which dates?"
UMV#1: "All of 2007 and a little bit of 2008, if I could."
UFV#1: "And the name as it appears on the card?"
UMV#1: "Edwards."
[computer keyboard noises]
UFV#1: "Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Edwards, we're showing those dates as fully committed."
UMV#1: "What?"
UFV#1: "Yes, we just booked them all to a . . . Mr. Obama, I think."
UMV#1: "What?"
UFV#1: "Would you like us to contact you in case of a cancellation?"
UMV#1: "Um . . . I guess . . ."
UFV#1: "Could I put you on hold, sir?"
UMV#1: "Sure."
[unidentified hold music]

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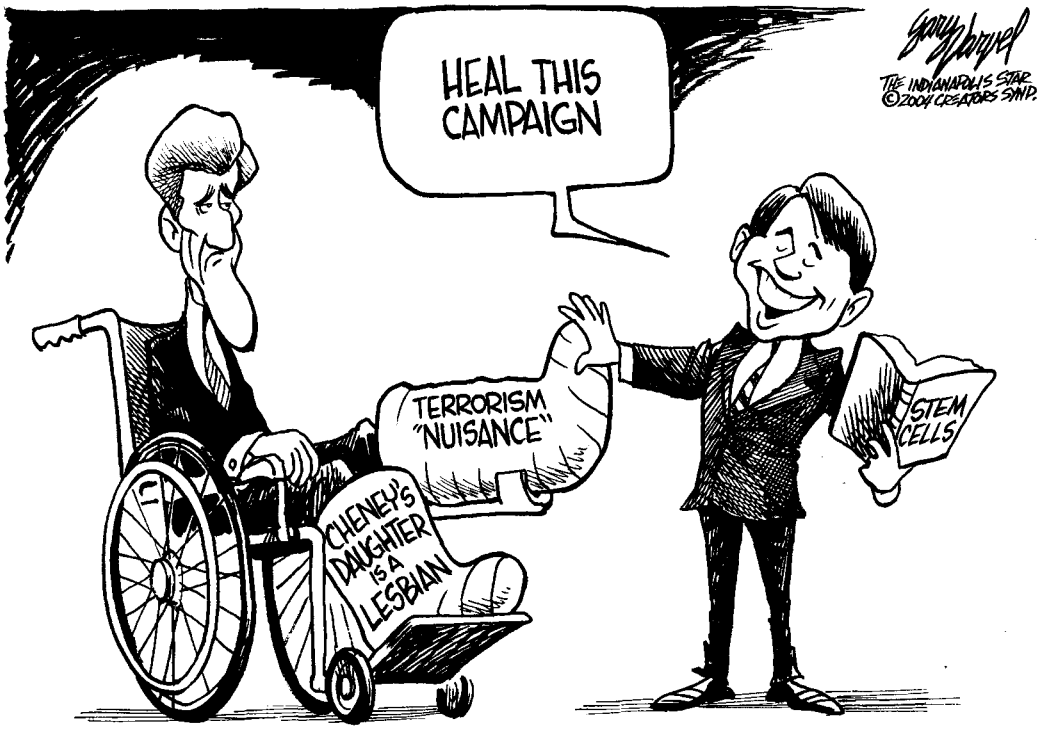
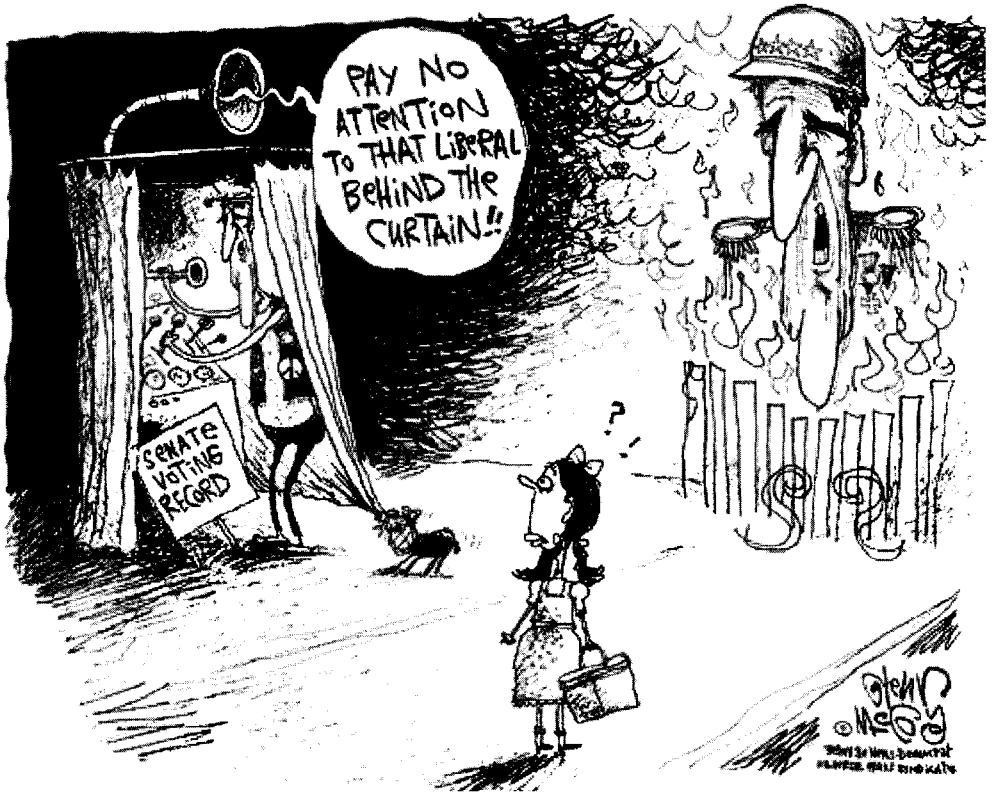
HELP!!!!





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God Bless Australia

Down under, where the koala bears
Tilt toward Conservative,
John Howard gave that Labour guy
The sharp end of the shiv,
Distressing Kerry's sister, who'd
Been stumping for the slain—
A poignant portent at this point.
Bill Clinton feels her pain.

—W. H. von Dreele

"He takes after his father, but we're hoping he'll grow out of it."

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Just Say *Non*

Our Oldest Enemy: A History of America's Disastrous Relationship with France, by John J. Miller and Mark Molesky (Doubleday, 304 pp., $24.95)

ARTHUR HERMAN

WHY are relations between France and the United States so bad these days? After reading this book, one might be excused for wondering when they were ever good. Certainly not since the American Revolution, is the final verdict, and not really even then.

Our Oldest Enemy, a collaboration between NATIONAL REVIEW's John Miller and historian Mark Molesky, is popular revisionist history in the best sense, a reexamination of the turbulent relationship between France and America in light of recent events, particularly the war in Iraq. It recounts much that has been forgotten by or hidden from the general reader, while letting him see the familiar, such as the liberation of France in World War II, from a fresh angle. The authors have an ax to grind: but it is a wickedly sharp, carefully honed ax. Miller and Molesky may overstate their case with their title, but no one after reading the book will fall for the notion of France as "our oldest ally" again.

Mr. Herman is the author of *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*. His latest book, *To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World*, will be released in November.

According to Miller and Molesky, it's been hate at first sight.

The ugliness began in the early 18th century, when American settlers became pawns in the struggle between France and Britain in the New World. Since the French liked to goad their Indian allies into massacring entire settlements, including women and children, the colonists learned to hate the Gallic sponsors of the terrorism in their midst, in this case terror with tomahawks instead of car bombs. The French returned the enmity with interest: Propagandists denounced George Washington, the young colonel of the Virginia militia who fought against them at Fort Necessity in 1754, as a coward and "assassin" (of course, when it suited them later in the American Revolution, they buried the hatchet and hailed him as a hero).

It was fear and loathing of the French, not of the British, that first encouraged the 13 colonies to draw together for mutual support against the threat on their frontier. By 1763 France had lost the war, and its hopes of an American empire; but those hopes revived when the colonists and the British Crown came to blows in 1776. It was revenge, not love of American liberty, that prompted the French to support the Founding Fathers—and it did so only after the colonists' victory at Saratoga had proven to the French that they would be backing a winner. The one sincere standard-bearer of Franco-American comity, the Marquis de Lafayette, was reviled and ridiculed in his own country; and after independence was won, America would fight its first war as a fledgling republic against its erstwhile ally.

From 1798 to 1800, France and the United States fought an undeclared war at sea, with French privateers shamelessly looting American merchants and with the republic's new navy—led by "Old Ironsides," the USS *Constitution*—getting its baptism of fire and capturing more than 80 French vessels. Even after the last shot was fired, the issue of compensation for American merchants whom the French had ruined would drag on and poison relations between the two countries into the 1830s. "It is high time," said Andrew Jackson after long and bitter experience, "that this arrogance of France be put down." Only the threat of war finally forced the French to pay up—but not before they had demanded an apology from Jackson. "Apologize!" he exclaimed. "I'd see the whole race roasting in hell first!"

Abraham Lincoln would have agreed with the sentiment, if not the language. He found himself constantly vexed by Napoleon III's efforts to establish an empire in Mexico under the ill-fated Prince Maximilian and his support for the Confederacy. This same Napoleon had the idea of a French canal in Panama, to sever the United States from Latin America and to revive France's already-shrinking global role; but the effort was, as we all know, in vain. France's hopes of becoming the world's leading power were crushed with the fall of Quebec in 1759, and crushed again at Trafalgar 46 years later. Its hopes of at least dominating Europe vanished with Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig in 1813, to which its humiliating collapse in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 put the permanent seal.

Ever since, a bitter sense of thwarted destiny has been the directing demon of France's foreign policy; it has been exacerbated by the secret shame of not only having failed to stop Hitler's Third Reich but—after 1940—having actively connived in his domination of Europe and destruction of the Jews. This bitterness has manifested itself in a ceaseless hostility not just to America's geopolitical strength but even to its popular culture, which French elites (though not the French public) view as a cancer spreading across their land. "The Americans constitute a real danger to France," wrote the founder of France's most prestigious newspaper, *Le Monde* . . . on the eve of the D-Day landings in 1944.

So why can't the French forget the past and just face reality? That is the question Miller and Molesky leave open. They see the problem as stemming from the "long shadow" of Napoleon Bonaparte, a nostalgic desire to reclaim the power and prestige that his empire once gave France. But everything suggests the issue goes deeper than that.

France has been at odds with the Anglo-Saxon world almost as long as there has been a France. It was in the 12th century that the Abbé Suger first said, "The English are bound by natural and moral law to be subject to the French and not contrariwise." Both nations tested that proposition throughout the Middle Ages; in the modern

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If you're missing that fortnightly Florence Fix since she penned her last *NR* column in September, 2002, despair not: Now all that superior commentary—all that crackling prose, all that slashing and burning, all that vim, vigor, and verbal vinegar—that made "The Misanthrope's Corner" a must-read has been collected—every single thoroughly enjoyable, eye-poking, nincompoop-poohing word—in ***STET, Damnit!*** This beautifully printed hardcover edition weighs in at some 528 pages of 200-proof pure-grain Florence, distilling every word from every column (including the typos we let slip through in the originals!) that the Mother of All Curmudgeons wrote for her back-page sanctuary of sanity.

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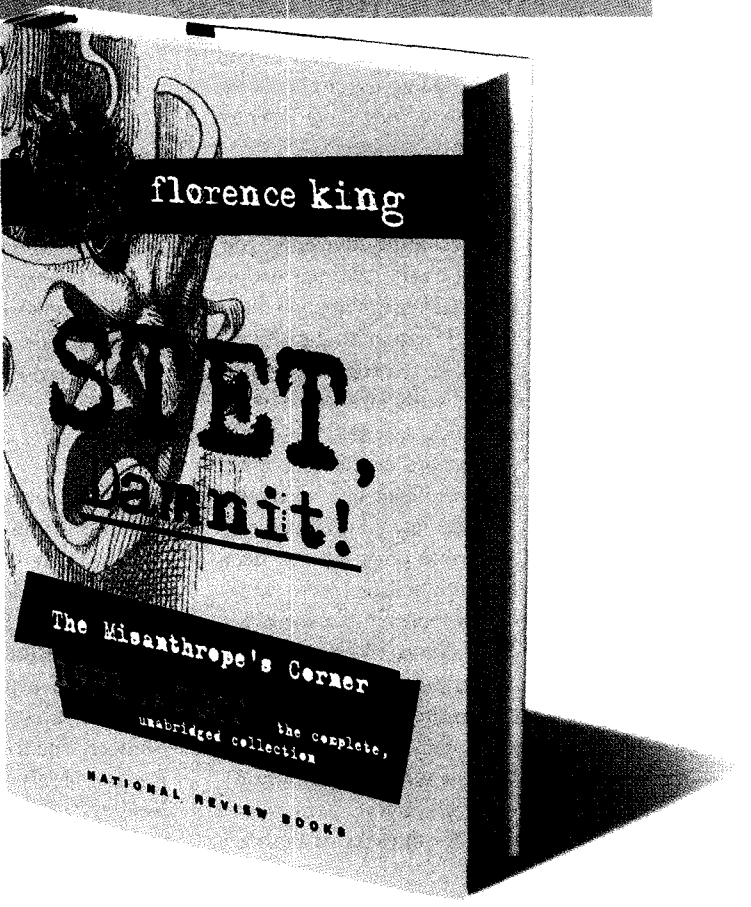

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era, they grappled for world dominance. After World War II, America became the heir to the Pax Britannica against which French rulers had fought, schemed, and plotted in vain for upwards of 300 years, and inherited with it France's unyielding enmity. The French and Indian Wars, Bonaparte's effort to break Britain with his Continental System, Napoleon III's grandiose canal projects for Suez and Panama, de Gaulle's closing of American bases in France, and Jacques Chirac's support for Saddam Hussein and threatened vetoes in the Security Council all form part of a single historical impulse: to break the hold Anglo-Saxon values have over so much of the world.

Only once, in 1904, did France manage to set aside its ancient grudge, when it had to confront a much more menacing foe: Germany. It could easily have reached an accord with its eastern neighbor, and made the world safe for Prussian militarism and imperialism. Instead, it chose to sign the Entente Cordiale with Britain, making France, in historian A. J. P. Taylor's words, "democracy's hostage on the European continent"—and the front line when war broke out a decade later. For four years France paid a terrible price for that decision. Its northeastern portions were devastated, its economy reduced to a shambles, and 1.5 million—almost 10 percent of the adult male population—killed in the trenches. With unbelievable courage, France gave up not only its sons (three in a single family was not uncommon), fathers, and brothers, but its present and future prosperity, for the sake of Europe's freedom.

It was a conscious act of self-sacrifice without parallel in modern history. In 1940, the French were asked to make the sacrifice again and chose not to. It is hard to blame them. Today, they have come to believe their own reputation: that they are born cynics and too worldly and sophisticated to be anything but self-interested. It was not always thus. Miller and Molesky relate Prime Minister Clemenceau's reaction when the great German offensive of 1918 was closing on Paris and his cabinet wanted to leave the city. "Yes," he agreed, "we are too far from the front." That is the spirit that saves democratic civilization—and will save it again. **NR**

Reagan as Pundit

Reagan's Path to Victory: The Shaping of Ronald Reagan's Vision: Selected Writings, edited by Kiron K. Skinner, Annelise Anderson, and Martin Anderson (Free Press, 538 pp., $35)

STEVEN F. HAYWARD

It has been said that history is too important to be left to historians, and proof of this remark is given by the fact that the most significant work done on Ronald Reagan has come not from historians, but from two economists and a political scientist, Martin and Annelise Anderson, and Kiron Skinner. The trio's publication in 2001 of *Reagan in His Own Hand*, a collection of Reagan's handwritten radio addresses and speeches, marked a watershed in the public's knowledge and estimation of Reagan. It proved that Reagan was no mere creature of speechwriters and handlers, as his detractors had long alleged, but was in fact the prime mover of his public career.

Skinner and the Andersons followed up last year with a collection of Reagan's personal letters (he may have written as many as 10,000), and now complete the cycle with a fresh batch of Reagan's handwritten radio commentaries from the last half of the 1970s, which reflect Reagan working out his views on the full spectrum of domestic and foreign issues. Thanks to the Andersons and Skinner, the slur that Reagan was lazy, uninformed, and ignorant of the details of federal policy should have been consigned once and for all to the ash heap of history.

This prominent aspect of the Reagan story is surprisingly little known. When he left the California governorship in 1975, Reagan began a twice-weekly newspaper column and a five-day-a-week syndicated radio commentary that was carried on more than 300 stations, reaching an estimated 20 to 30 million listeners. It was a way of making a good living as well as keeping his views in front of the public, but it was also a way of making himself the rallying point for the conservative movement that was readying itself for a drive to power. In this respect, Reagan's media career during his "wilderness years" in the late 1970s resembles Winston Churchill's "wilderness years" in the 1930s, when he too used his writing to make himself the rallying point against his government's weakness.

Most of Reagan's newspaper columns were ghostwritten for him by Peter Hannaford, and it was always assumed that the radio commentaries were ghosted as well. But Reagan, an ex-radio broadcaster, took a keen interest in his radio portfolio and wrote the bulk of those commentaries himself. Over five years, Reagan broadcast 1,027 commentaries; the Andersons and Skinner discovered Reagan's handwritten drafts of 682 of them. It is likely that Reagan wrote even more than this, but the handwritten drafts were lost or discarded.

The Reagan that emerges from this enormous corpus of writings is full of curiosity: He cast a wide net for information, and went far beyond generalities to discuss the inner workings of obscure government programs and regulations. Reagan displayed a talent for explaining complicated regulations, such as how the Clean Air Act's "prevention of significant deterioration" policy works, in just three minutes, along with a critique and alternative ideas for achieving the same

Mr. Hayward is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and the author of *The Age of Reagan: The Fall of the Older Liberal Order, 1964-1980*. He is now completing a second volume of *The Age of Reagan* on the presidential years, 1981-1989.

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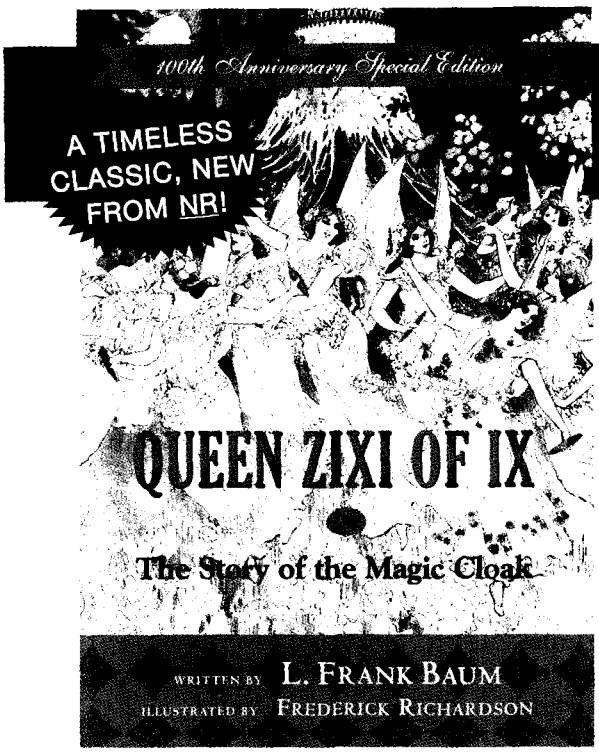
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He's best known as the author of the revered *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and its many sequels, but it was ***Queen Zixi of Ix, or The Story of the Magic Cloak*** that the great L. Frank Baum considered his best work. And he was *right*: The 1904 classic is so wonderful a tale, so deserving rediscovery today, that *National Review* has faithfully reproduced it (with 90 illustrations by Frederick Richardson!) in a beautiful 160-page high-quality softcover book that you *must* have for those deserving young ones (kids, grandkids, nieces and nephews—they'l all love it!). A glorious tale of wonder, magic, virtue, fairies, royalty, armies, plots, fortune and misfortune, talking animals, fantasy, nonsense, and nasty creatures (the "Roly Rogues"!), *Queen Zixi of Ix* is yours **FREE** when you purchase one of *NR*'s acclaimed "Treasury Classic" collections.

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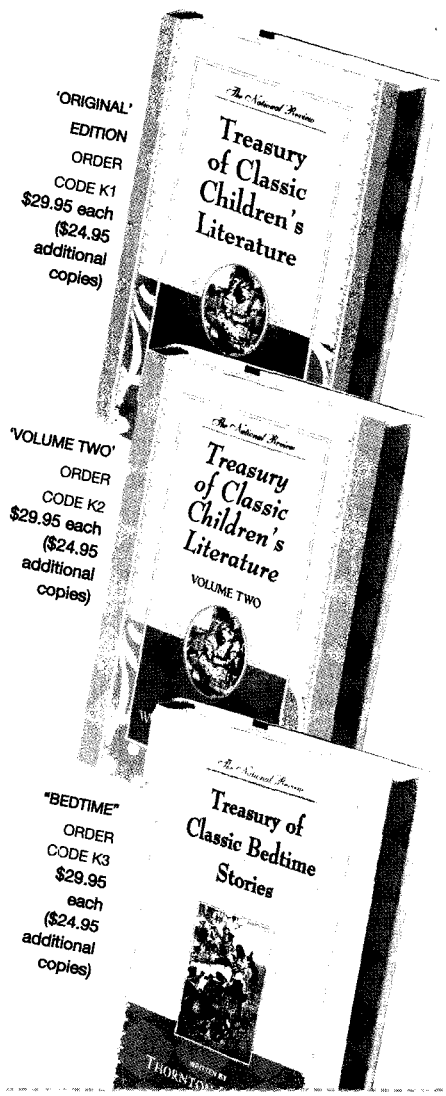
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goals. (On another occasion, he took after the Consumer Product Safety Commission for its regulation of lawn mowers.) Often Reagan would devote three or four commentaries to the same subject over the course of consecutive broadcasts. Stitched together, these serial commentaries offer a complete teaching on issues such as inflation, tax policy, welfare reform, the environment, and foreign policy.

The remarkable range and depth of Reagan's writings suggests that he was arguably the best-prepared person to enter the White House in modern times. This was not a person who needed to consult polls and policy wonks to decide what was important or what he should think. The commentaries presage several prominent themes of his presidency, especially the centrality of controlling inflation along with the arguments for cutting income-tax rates. One especially significant commentary was his attack in 1977 on the Federal Communications Commission's "fairness doctrine," which President Reagan's FCC abolished in 1987, helping to open the way for conservative talk radio. And scattered throughout are a number of familiar arguments and quips that he used during his presidency. (My favorite is his quip about liberal economists "who have a Phi Beta Kappa key on one end of their watch chains and no watch on the other." This appeared in one of his first commentaries in 1975, and he used it in one of his presidential speeches in 1981.) Reagan's remarkable economic literacy shines forth in his domestic-policy commentaries.

Some readers may find the format of this collection slightly difficult, as the editors have reprinted Reagan's words exactly as he wrote them (and in chronological order), with his changes and crossouts marked in italics or capital letters. The editors do not interpolate Reagan's lacunae or correct his idiosyncratic shorthand spelling ("burocrat" for bureaucrat). This literalness is useful, however, in illuminating Reagan's self-editing abilities and his talent for achieving economy of expression. The reader will also appreciate more fully that the Reagan style originated with him and not his speechwriters. The format of Reagan's commentaries required him to write pithy, one-sentence leads, or "teasers," after which he'd say, "I'll be right [or sometimes "rite"] back" before breaking for a commercial. He wrote leads worthy of the best op-ed practitioners. An example: "The ability of Burocracy in the field of self preservation should be an inspiration to all those who teach survival courses. I'll be right back."

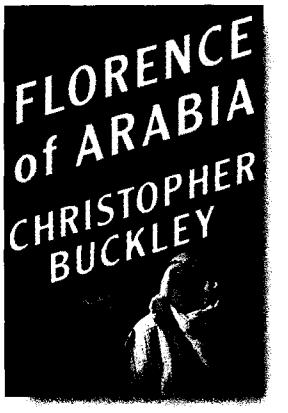
The reader of this book will appreciate more fully that the Reagan style originated with him and not his speechwriters.

He was a skillful aphorist. My favorite is one from 1977 that holds up well today: "If words could be burned as fuel Congress would have the energy crisis solved and we'd be in the export business." Another: "I've always suspected the Russian Athletes do as well as they do [at the Olympics] because they think there are real bullets in the starters gun."

The commentaries were not all-politics-all-the-time. Reagan would often do a "human interest" commentary that sounded more like Paul Harvey than an aspiring president. Commentaries about sports figures, children struggling with debilitating diseases, and the rare uplifting Hollywood movie show the side of Reagan that innately connected the greatness of the nation to its character as well as its principles. But it requires someone not wholly consumed with politics as are most national figures these days to understand this and express it as Reagan did. Remember, this is a man who read the comics and the sports section in the morning before the news pages.

It is rare to have a window into a public figure working out his views in real time. This collection, along with the previous two by the Andersons and Skinner, constitutes a primary source for all future historians and political scientists who evaluate the 40th president. No appraisal of Reagan can be complete without reckoning with the self-discipline and seriousness that is revealed here. **NR**

Queen of The Desert



Florence Of Arabia,
by Christopher Buckley
(Random House, 272 pp., $24.95)

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

All it takes for evil to prevail, warned Burke, is "for enough good men to do nothing." True; but that doesn't mean that the good men cannot occasionally relax with a good laugh or two. It might even help them, especially in a situation of the kind the West faces today: a war with an ideology so dedicated to the destruction of happiness that, in the shape of the Taliban, it made laughing too loud in public a crime. (For women, anyway.)

In *Florence of Arabia*, his dark, disturbing, and very funny new satire, Christopher Buckley highlights the cruelty of radical Islamism and the contradictions of America's response to it. He does this against a backdrop not of history at its grimmest or journalism at its most intense, but of jokes, mockery, bouts of wordplay (a State Department bureaucrat is a "desk-limpet," an Arab potentate has lips that are "oyster-moist from a lifetime's contact with the greatest delicacies the world [has] to offer"), and puns that teeter on the edge of catastrophe: The repressive Arab kingdom that is—along, naturally, with France—the main villain

Mr. Stuttaford is a contributing editor of National Review Online.

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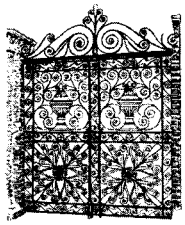
of this book goes by the name of Wasabia.

Wasabia is a sand-swept nightmare marked by oil wealth, joylessness, corruption, and ritualized cruelty, a tyranny where "offenses that in other religions would earn you a lecture from the rabbi, five Hail Marys from a priest, and, for Episcopalians, a plastic pink flamingo on your front lawn" are punished by "beheading, amputation, flogging, blinding, and having your tongue cut out . . . A Google search using the key phrases 'Wasabia' and 'La Dolce Vita' results in no matches." Well, Prince Bandar, does *that* remind you of anywhere?

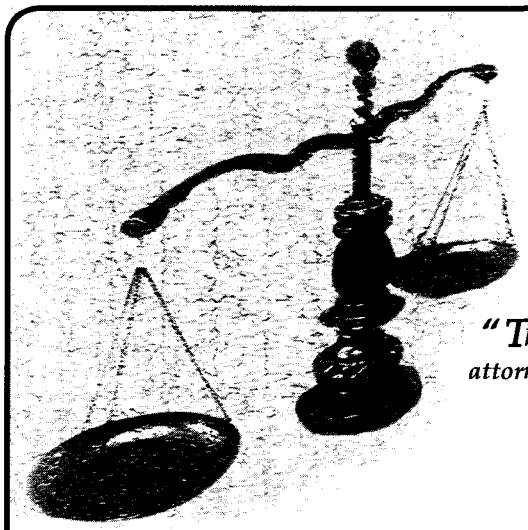
Gallows humor? Certainly. But insofar as the jihadists—with their car bombs, suicide bombs, and dreams of dirty bombs and worse—wish to shove you and me into mass graves at the earliest possible moment, a touch of Tyburn does not seem amiss. Of course, there are people who will find some of what Buckley has to say distinctly, you know, *insensitive*. The caliphs of multiculturalism will twitch a little, and this is not a book that will find many fans in Foggy Bottom ("the State Department's reflexive response to any American in extremis overseas is to hand them a pamphlet—along with a list of incompetent local lawyers—and say, 'We told you so'").

But satire should not make comfortable reading for the subscribers to *any* orthodoxy. Running through this book is the clear implication that the American approach to the Middle East has not worked out *quite* as well as might have been hoped. And what, exactly, is the role played in Buckley's drama by the Waldorf Group, an investment company (named, hmmm, after a New York hotel) that has danced a little too long, a little too closely, and a little too profitably with the despots of Wasabia?



But about Buckley's heroine Florence, at least, there are no doubts. Forced out of the State Department for her unwanted imagination and initiative, she now has a new assignment: using covert funds to set up a TV station to transmit to the Arab masses. This will not, of course, be another Al-Jazeera, glossily repackaging nationalist resentments and religious prejudice 24/7, but nor will it be a source of ticky-tacky U.S. propaganda, ineffectively boasting about multicultural contentment in midwestern suburbs. Instead it will be something altogether more revolutionary, directed at the most excluded and mistreated of all the Arab masses: women. This will be *Lifetime* for women who *really* have no lives, its purpose to promote female emancipation as a counterbalance to militant Islam.

Qatar, the home of Al-Jazeera, being presumably unavailable, Florence's TV station is hosted by the venal but fairly relaxed emirate of Matar ("pronounced, for reasons unclear, Mutter"), a statelet created by Churchill at one of those colonial conferences that have done so much to make the Middle East the cheery place



"Justice, the skill to treat with consideration and wisdom those with whom we are associated."

— Marcus Tullius Cicero
from *De Officiis*

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that it is today. "One might suspect," writes Buckley, "that its borders had been drawn so as to deprive . . . Wasabia of access to the sea. One would be right." The result was to leave Matar rich, permanently grateful to old Winston (spotting Matar's Churchillian place names is one of the book's many pleasures), and under the control of a royal family that knows how to handle its mullahs: cash, cars, and "an annual six-week paid sabbatical, which most of them chose to take in the South of France, one of Islam's holiest sites."

This relatively tolerant country makes an ideal base for Florence and her offbeat and entertaining team: a delightfully cynical PR man, a State Department employee so camp that he could have been pitching tents with T. E. Lawrence, and a CIA Col. Kurtz lite (a seductive—ask Florence—and effective mix of *Esquire* and *Soldier of Fortune*).

Throughout, Buckley's lightly ironic tone only accentuates the savagery that is his main target, making it somehow all the more terrible when, as in this extract, it comes into clear, brutal focus:

> The package turned out to contain a videotape. It showed Fatima buried in sand up to her neck, being stoned to death with small rocks. The tape was twenty minutes long. Everyone who watched it wept. Florence brought the tape to Laila. She could not bring herself to view it again so she left the room while Laila viewed it. She waited outside on the terrace, looking out over the Gulf in the moonlight, her skin misted by salty droplets from the fountain that spouted out the royal crest. Laila emerged, pale and shaken. Neither woman spoke. The two of them stood by the balustrade overlooking the gardens, listening to the waves lap the shore and the onshore breeze rustle the fronds of the date palms.

And then, right at the end of this book, cruel, bleak, awful reality finally comes crashing in. There, in the closing acknowledgments, Buckley pays tribute to Fern Holland, "a real-life Florence of Arabia," who was assassinated in Iraq on March 9, 2004.

She was trying to help, and that would not do. **NR**

Hardy Perennial

The Secret of the Hardy Boys: Leslie McFarlane and the Stratemeyer Syndicate, by Marilyn S. Greenwald (Ohio University, 384 pp., $32.95)

S. T. KARNICK

THE Hardy Boys books have sold more than 50 million copies since the first volume appeared in 1927. Countless young people have grown up on them, developing a love for literature through these unpretentious tales of Frank and Joe Hardy, two energetic teenagers who solve mysteries in the fictional small American town of Bayport.

This huge success was by no means the simple result of canny marketing or sheer luck. Although critics have long dismissed the books as insufficiently sophisticated and of scant literary value, such cavils overlook the great virtues of these stories. In fact, virtue and vice are at the center of the Hardy Boys tales, and the books' treatment of fundamental moral choices is a central aspect of their wide appeal.

The creators of the series were never greatly concerned with literary merit—they were out to secure a steady stream of money by appealing to a broad spectrum of young readers. The idea for the series came from Edward Stratemeyer, who built a publishing empire in the 1910s and 1920s on the strength of several child-fiction series written by ghostwriters from detailed synopses he provided. Among his highly successful series were those featuring Nancy Drew, the Bobbsey Twins, Tom Swift, the Rover Boys, Dave Fearless, and Bomba the Jungle Boy.

A church-going straight arrow who was intensely concerned about moral issues, Stratemeyer took the formula of the dime novel and incorporated 20th-century conditions—including new technologies and social freedoms—to make his books unusually relevant and engrossing for young readers. He created a variety of authorial pseudonyms, one for each series, and quickly started to farm out the actual writing, mostly to hungry newspaper reporters looking for a little extra cash. One of these was Leslie McFarlane, an especially famished reporter based in rural Ontario, who began writing for Stratemeyer in 1926.

After cutting his teeth on several Dave Fearless books, which he found frustratingly silly and melodramatic, McFarlane accepted the opportunity to begin a new series relating the exploits of the two teenage Hardys. The attraction for McFarlane, as Marilyn S. Greenwald notes in this new biography, was that "the books would focus more on dialogue, plot, description, and narrative than on simple action." Stratemeyer retained his usual requirements that the books be written to an exact page count and that the author stick strictly to the detailed chapter outlines he provided; but, as Greenwald points out, the publisher allowed McFarlane "to insert his own style into this series, as well as his views on such diverse issues as authority, family, and life's small pleasures." Under the pseudonym of Franklin W. Dixon, McFarlane made the books his own. He wrote carefully and without condescension (often taking delight in driving his young readers to the dictionary to look up words such as *ostensible* and *propounded*), incorporating people and places he had encountered in his child-

Mr. Karnick is senior editor for the Heartland Institute and an associate fellow of the Sagamore Institute.

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hood in rough, rural northern Ontario.

McFarlane contributed the first 16 volumes of the series, plus a handful of later ones, before handing off the engagement for good in 1946. In the 1960s, Stratemeyer's heirs updated the books, revising, shortening, and bowdlerizing them for what is now called political correctness. This was by no means an improvement, and many aficionados prefer the original versions.

Profit margins for these series were very low, so Stratemeyer could not pay the authors much, and they received no royalties or other payments beyond the original flat fee. Nor could they reveal their identities as ghostwriters. In later years, McFarlane never complained about the arrangement, because he had freely entered into it. Much of Greenwald's book tells of his economic hardships and the Loneliness of the Long-Distance Freelancer, but the narrative is most interesting when it leaves McFarlane at his typewriter and considers his one memorable achievement, the Hardy Boys.

And they were truly his creation. Although Stratemeyer provided the author with descriptions of the town and major characters, McFarlane brought these to life through telling details, and imprinted a spunky, down-to-earth style on the series. He enjoyed including humor and horseplay, which added to the appeal—the books were fun to read, and they still are. In addition, the politically conservative McFarlane gave the stories a cheeky skepticism toward authority figures, which would obviously appeal to most young people and is a healthy attitude as the author presents it (his target is not authority itself but the imperfect human beings who hold it).

The series sold well though not spectacularly for the first couple of years, but over time it developed an immense following. Capitalizing on the increasing popularity of detective fiction in adult novels and movies, the books followed a strict formula. The boys take on a case (usually one initially meant for their father, the celebrated private detective Fenton Hardy), follow a trail left by the evildoers, stride into mortal danger, and escape just in time (either rescued by others or through their own ingenuity, courage, and athleticism). Then, as Greenwald puts it, "the criminals confess and good triumphs."

The conflicts all play out in action—the dialogue is usually about the problems at hand, not how the characters feel about the situation or, worse yet, themselves. One of the fine things about the Hardy Boys books is their cheerful avoidance of psychology. The purpose of psychology, after all, is to explain behavior, and—in literature as in the courts—that all too often means explaining away misbehavior. The Hardy Boys stories, by contrast, rely on normal motives we all have experienced. It is the characters' moral values and conscious choices, not some irresistible psychological forces, that impel their actions. The protagonists are typically motivated by courage, common sense, and altruism; the villains by garden-variety vices such as greed, gluttony, sloth, and anger. The stories depict conflicts in which the moral lines are very clear, but the individuals involved are not entirely good or evil, contrary to the common impression that the books are simple morality tales pitting immaculate heroes against thoroughly depraved antagonists. The Hardy Boys and their pals display many imperfections, and the villains can be quite bold and clever.

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interesting to young readers (and many older ones) is the particularity of the characters and the situations: McFarlane makes them real to the readers, and the resulting sympathy and identification inspire us to ponder our own likely responses to the same circumstances. As Greenwald notes, when adults discuss why they liked the Hardy Boys books when they were young, "nearly all mention an identification they had with the characters, the ability of the books to engage the senses, and the quirks that made the characters sympathetic and not wooden."

This quirky specificity and lack of condescension are McFarlane's great contribution to the series, and they are the reason the stories remain so memorable and affecting. The Hardy Boys live in a small-town America much like the one that existed in the early years of the last century (albeit with rather more crime), but their stories point to common human feelings and depict the kinds of hard choices we all have to face at one time or another. In so doing, they enable young people to exercise their moral faculties—an activity from which children of any time can benefit greatly. **NR**

Living Text

The Bible in History: How the Texts Have Shaped the Times, by David W. Kling (Oxford, 408 pp., $35)

JOHN WILSON

ACCORDING to the demographer David Barrett, there were roughly 34,000 Christian denominations at the beginning of the 21st century, a total projected to reach 62,000 by the year 2025. And as Barrett would be the first to acknowledge, given the looseness of *denomination* as a category, no one knows how big the numbers really are: Someone is probably starting a new denomination right down the street from you at this very moment, while another existing church body is splitting in two.

Mr. Wilson is the editor of *Books & Culture*, a bimonthly review. He is also the editor of the *Best Christian Writing* series, the most recent volume of which is *The Best Christian Writing 2004* (Jossey-Bass).

All of these groups, from the storefront Fire-Baptized Holiness Temple to the worldwide Church over which Pope John Paul II presides, derive their identity from the Bible. And each group interprets the Bible differently from all the others, to a greater or lesser degree. In certain southern communities much beloved by ethnographers and moviemakers, a single verse from the Gospel of Mark looms large ("They shall take up serpents," Mark 16:18 begins), while the vast majority of Christians pass over that verse in silence (or are told that in the best manuscripts, Mark ends with verse 8).

That Christians are endlessly disputatious hardly comes as news. The great merit of David Kling's book, *The Bible in History*, is to flesh out this conflict of interpretations in eight case studies, each of which focuses on a key Biblical text or cluster of texts. When Jesus told the rich young ruler, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me" (Matthew 19:21), did he mean it literally? Did he mean it normatively, for all Christians in all times? If you are serious about following Jesus, should you sell your GameBoy and your Volvo and your house in the suburbs? (And then what?) Or would that be an example of the "misguided literalism" Kling cites in another context, as when, "for example, a handful of Anabaptists strictly obeyed Jesus' words to his twelve disciples in Matthew 10:9-10 and so wandered about the countryside without weapons, money, or a change of clothes"?

Most Christians have not taken Jesus' words to the rich young ruler literally. But some have. Kling instances St. Anthony (c. 251-356), who gave up his possessions and retreated to the Egyptian desert, inspiring the monastic movement by his example, which was given currency by a biography that was read throughout the Christian world. Taking this as a point of departure, Kling shows vividly how Scripture has been endlessly reinterpreted. He casts his net wide in the course of the book, with chapters on the papacy, the Song of Songs (is it an allegory of divine love, a paean to sexual love, or both, or something else altogether?), Luther and his discovery of grace, the Anabaptists and the peace tradition, the theme of Exodus in the

DECEMBER FIFTH

The wind came before the snow and
Before the darkness. The forest that
Was settled, brown and gray and auburn,
Beneath a light sky and a fine,
Driven snow, had its trees turn
Black, against the ground turned white.
The lake, part ice and part clear,
Turned from its many shades of silver
To black water against white ice.

And as the wind rose and darkness
Fell, hundreds of geese, spectral as
Bats, barely even to be distinguished
From the darkness, descended upon
What was left of the open water
In a raging cacophony of calls,
For a time running the sounds of their
Riotous, unexpected life well above
The storm, and deep into the darkness.

—WILLIAM RUNYEON

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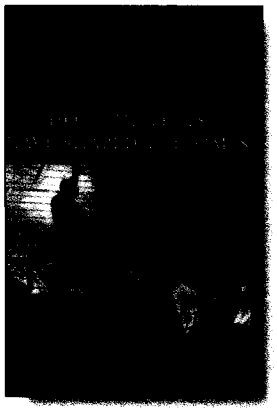
African American church, the roots of Pentecostalism, and the battle over women in ministry.

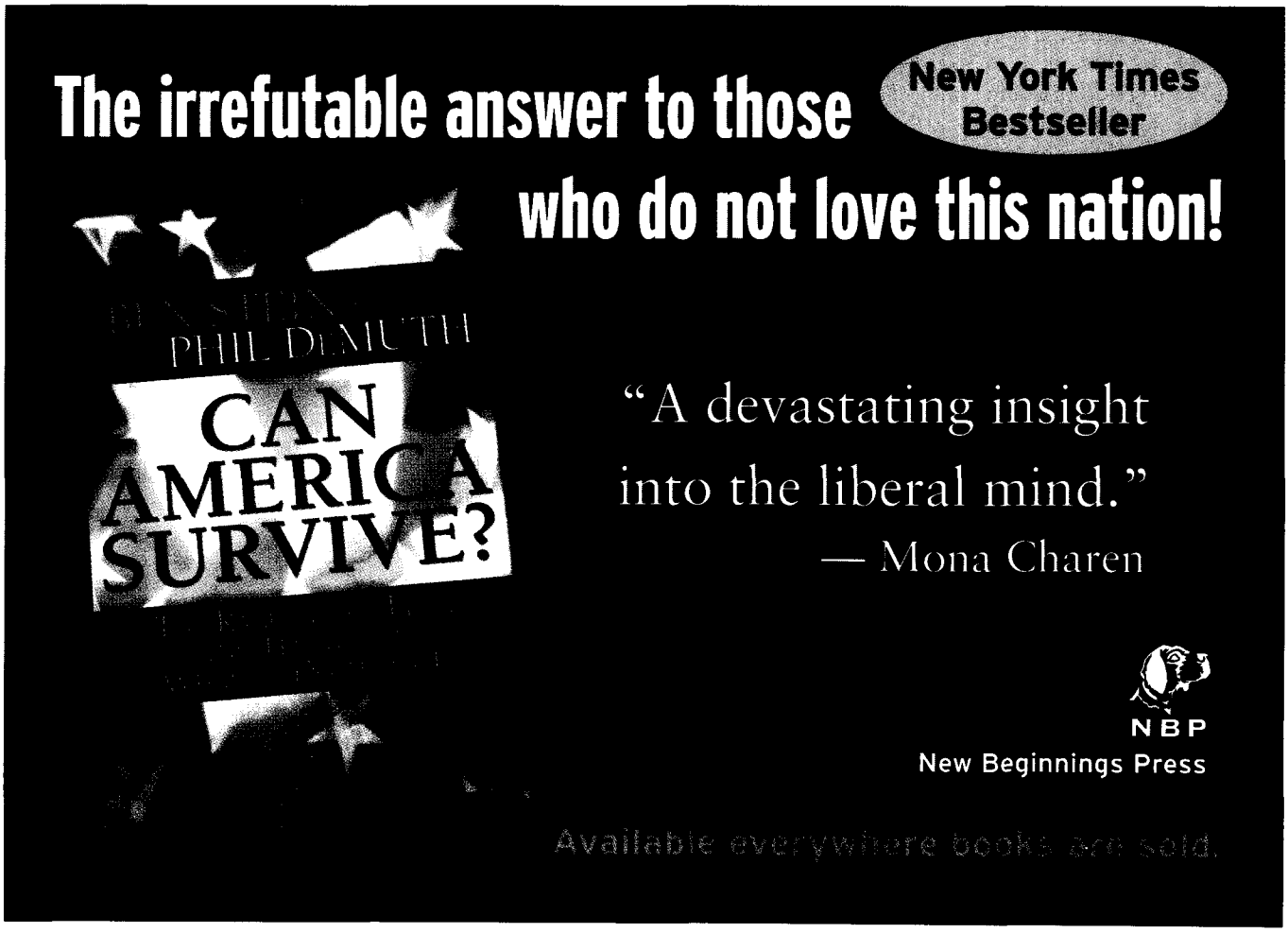
Whether your acquaintance with the Bible is largely limited to *Life of Brian* or you have taken a seminary course in hermeneutics, you will profit from reading Kling's book. (If I were *New York Times* editor Bill Keller, I would make it required reading for everyone at the *Times* who needs to understand how evangelical Christians think, for while Kling's studies are not at all limited to that tradition, evangelicals are supremely readers of Scripture.) And yet, alas, *The Bible in History* is flawed in ways that may limit the book's reach.

As with so many products of the academy, the problems start with the writing, sentence by sentence. An elephantine fussiness, evident in the impulse to document every statement with an endnote, is incongruously yoked with a weakness for bland boilerplate, especially in the summary sections. But the deeper problems with the book are conceptual. The subtitle, *How the Texts Have Shaped the Times*, is misleading. It suggests, for instance, that the chapter on St. Anthony and monasticism will say something about the impact of the monastic movement, or that the chapter on Pentecostalism will say something about that movement and "the times." In fact we get very little of this.



Both in his introduction and in the conclusion to the book, Kling seems to be struggling to articulate a thesis, apart from that which is obviously exemplified in all his case studies—that Christians have read the Bible in a dizzying variety of ways, and that those differing readings are often embedded in particular historical circumstances. His failure to make clear what he supposes to be the novelty of his approach beyond this commonsense understanding does not at all undermine the value of his nitty-gritty accounts of conflicting interpretations, where he is at his best. But Kling does leave the reader wondering what to make of the stories he has told. One response, of course—the skeptic's version—would be to see these case studies as adding up to a knockdown argument against Christianity: *These people have a book they claim to be divinely inspired, an infallible guide in matters of faith and conduct—and they can't begin to agree on what it actually says! Case closed.* A second response—the fundamentalist one—would be to cock an eyebrow: Yes, and what did you expect? *There is the right way to understand Scripture, the plain and simple truth of it, and there are countless wrong ways, sowing diabolical confusion.*

Yet another response would be to consider a tension that gets short shrift in



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Kling's book: between, on one hand, the multiplicity of contested interpretations, and, on the other, the remarkable unity of conviction that joins 21st-century Christians from Chicago and Lagos and Singapore with their counterparts in 1st-century house churches. To understand why Christianity continues to thrive—to understand why, contrary to the prophets of secularization, the faith is experiencing an enormous surge, particularly in Africa and Asia—we have to consider this productive tension, which allows for both enormous flexibility and historical continuity.

As scholars such as Lamin Sanneh and Andrew Walls have shown, and as Kling himself notes in his conclusion, *translatability* is at the heart of the history of Christianity. The Bible translated into the vernacular languages of Africa and Asia, New Guinea and the Amazon basin, is at once the same Bible that Augustine and Luther read—the same Bible I read—and very different, giving rise to new questions, new interpretations. When the Bible is treated as if it consisted of a series of axioms, subject to only one reading, or when—at the other extreme—it becomes a playground for subjective interpretation, infinitely malleable, it loses the dynamic quality so apparent in Kling's account. A book that means Only One Thing isn't really a book, it's a blunt object. A book that can mean anything I want it to will soon prove irrelevant to anybody else. But a book that people will continue to pore over and argue about for 2,000 years and more—that's David Kling's subject. **NR**

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT

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■ MOVIES ■

Team Spirit

JAY NORDLINGER

SOMETHING strange happened after the first screenings of *Team America: World Police*: The Left squealed and squealed—not with delight, but in indignation, disbelief, and fury. They were being skewered, in this movie, and they weren't used to it. They are never skewered in the movies. They *own* the movies! How could this happen?

I thought of Fox News: Every other news network on the planet might be left-leaning, but should there be one that strays from the herd, a lot of people go nuts. This must be the way it is with monopolists: If you own almost everything on the block, the one building you don't own stands as a huge offense.

So, who's responsible for *Team America*? Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the duo from *South Park*. What is *South Park*? The animated, incredibly foul, anarcho-libertarian sitcom on Comedy Central. The show is beloved—or at least appreciated—by some conservatives, because it sends up the PC Left wildly. (Flaky, self-righteous environmentalists come in for special mockery.) And you will recall that, in 1999, Parker and Stone made a *South Park* movie, which parodied the cultural Right, among other things.

They met at the University of Colorado in Boulder, these two. They took the same film class, and as Parker told an interviewer in 1998, "We were the only ones who didn't want to make black-and-white films about lesbians." That set them apart as "conservatives" right there.

Soon they were in Hollywood, and their sitcom had been sold. Comedy Central placed no restrictions on them. Or rather, almost no restrictions: They couldn't make fun of the Nation of Islam. Why? As Parker put it to another interviewer, "We think it was out of fear that we'd be killed, and then [the network] wouldn't have a show." This is hardly irrelevant to the present situation.

Last summer, word leaked that the boys were preparing a movie that would parody the War on Terror. One White House official complained—to the Internet's Matt Drudge—that the war was no laughing matter. So now the Bushies were Censors of Art. Some of us duly debated the matter on CNN. When *Team America* came out, however, it wasn't the White House who was complaining. Certain lefties kept a kind of scorecard: How many times did Parker and Stone skewer the Terror Warriors, how many times did they skewer the Hollywood Left (the Left that gets skewered in this flick)?

Sean Penn is one of the skewerees, and, as soon as the movie was glimpsed, he sent a fiery note to the boys, closing, "All best, and a sincere f*** you." The boys remarked that the likes of Penn weren't accustomed to being mocked. That was an understatement: They are used to being honored as sages and saints (saints of the political kind).

Parker and Stone are amazingly fearless, willing never to eat lunch in their town again. George Clooney is a friend of theirs—or at least a friendly acquaintance—but they place him among their dupes and dolts, too. Parker told *In Focus*, "We've hung out with George. But the thing is, he was on that list, man—he was on that MoveOn.org. So we weren't gonna be hypocritical and be like, 'Well, let's not pick on George. He's our friend.' We're like, 'Nope: F*** you, George.'"

The duo likes to make enemies everywhere, being equal-opportunity insulters. But to insult the Left . . . is to do something shocking, and decisive. As Parker observed, "Basically, if you think Michael Moore's full of [something], then you are a super-Christian right-wing whatever. And we're both pretty middle-ground guys." The film critic of the *New York Times*, A. O. Scott, noted that Parker and Stone have "always been hard to place ideologically"—but "a number of commentators have discerned a pronounced conservative streak" in their work, "a hypothesis that 'Team America' to some extent confirms."

The movie—which is done with marionettes, incidentally—concerns the efforts of Team America (otherwise known as "the administration") to defeat the bad guys. Chief among these bad guys are Islamist terrorists and Kim Jong Il. The story opens in Paris, where, in the process of killing some terrorists, the Team accidentally blows up the Eiffel Tower, the

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Louvre, and much else. Here we see one of the movie's themes: America may be reckless, clumsy, heedless, but it means well, unlike its opponents.

Later, in Egypt, Team America blows up some large ancient statues (in addition to the Pyramids). I couldn't help thinking that the Taliban blew up such statues, deliberately. They thought that their religion demanded it.

Team members are rah-rah patriotic, and the Manhattanites with whom I saw the movie enjoyed laughing at them. One warrior (the protagonist, and our hero) visits the Lincoln Memorial, the Iwo Jima Memorial, and Arlington Cemetery, where he prays—they laugh. Every time a character gushes mock-Rumsfeldian rhetoric, they laugh.

But they stop laughing when the tables are turned—and some of them even walk out! Penn, Alec Baldwin, Tim Robbins, Martin Sheen, Matt Damon, et al. are members of the Film Actors Guild, or F.A.G. They spout nonsense (very true-to-life) about corporations, warmongering, and hybrid cars. When Team America is held hostage by Kim Jong Il, Penn and Sheen serve, for a while, as their guards. We're meant to think—I think we're meant to think—of Jane Fonda in Vietnam. Is this fair? No, it is savagely satirical—and probably no less fair than Michael Moore's putatively factual *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

Speaking of Moore, he is in *Team America*—definitely not *on* Team America—as a suicide bomber. He blows up Mt. Rushmore, site of Team America headquarters.

That is kind of funny. What isn't funny at all is when terrorists blow up the Panama Canal. The carnage is horrible. We see bodies in the fashion of 9/11. Then Alec Baldwin is depicted lecturing Team America, saying they're to blame: "The blood of the victims is on your hands." May I share an e-mail I received recently? This was right after terrorists in Iraq killed some 30 children: "The blood of these innocents is on the hands of those slimeballs, Bush and Cheney, and, Mr. Nordlinger, on your hands for supporting them. I hope their ripped-apart, bloody bodies float on your mind each night when you go to bed, because they should if there's any justice." Parker and Stone don't conjure a mentality out of the air.

The lead villain of the piece is Kim, the Dear Leader, who is a hoot, if an evil one. He often says, "Herro!" (That would be "Hello!" Did I mention that these guys are mind-bogglingly politically incorrect?) Kim feeds a gullible Hans Blix—"Hans Brix"—to the sharks. This is shortly after Blix asks to inspect Kim's palace, "or else." "Or else what?" asks the dictator. Or else—and this may be the most effective bit of satire in the whole movie—"we [the U.N.] will be very, very angry, and we will write a letter telling you how angry we are."

When he has them in his clutches, Kim sneers at Team America, "You're the last of the flag-waving Americans." But there's life in that breed yet: They trip up Kim, the terrorists, and the apologists who give them aid and comfort. (There's a loaded phrase.)

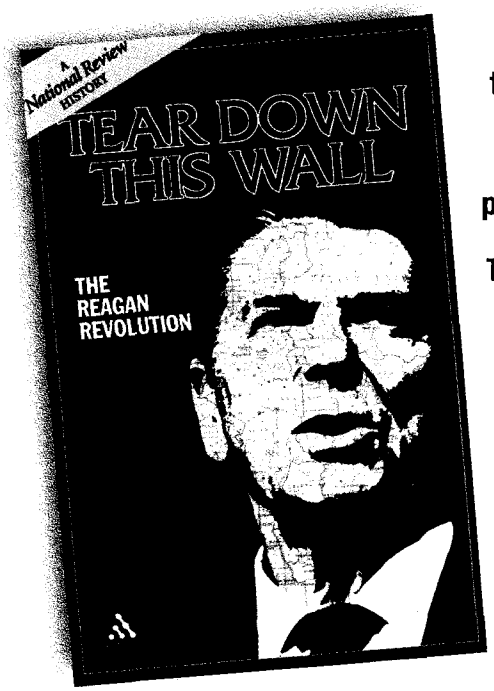
I have written a political review—not really a review at all. The movie is not a clear success, being too crude, for one thing. (By "crude," I don't mean dirty, which it is, to a revolting extent. I mean not clever enough.) In truth, the movie, slam-bang and brief as it is, is a little dull. It is partly a spoof of the action genre, stocked with entertainment-world references and allusions. And it has some amusing music.

Our main point here, however, is that *Team America* has the Left in a snit, which is a marvelous thing. It also puts the warriors on the side of cool, sort of—another marvelous thing. And none too common.

Refreshing about Trey Parker and Matt Stone is that they don't claim to be sages, or saints. Listen to Stone: "Uh, I keep hearing about these undecided voters, and I think, 'Who are these people?' I mean, do you know anybody that doesn't have an opinion about the election? So sure, we get our two cents in the movie, but who are we? A couple of guys so stupid we thought making a movie with marionettes would be fun."

Team America is fun. For some. **NR**

NR on RR



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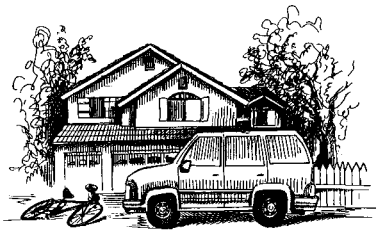
■ THE STRAGGLER ■

Boxing Day



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

"THREE! (. . . *two, three*)—Go!—Switch! Six! (. . . *four, five, six*)—Go!—Switch!—Switch! Twelve! (. . . *ten, eleven, twelve*)—Go!—Switch! . . ."

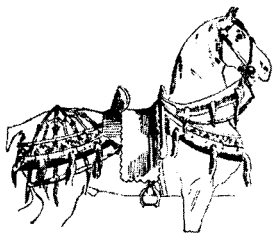
I am watching my son, Daniel, age nine, working the big bag. The instructor calls out how many blows the boy should land on the bag. After the last blow, Danny must dance off sideways round the bag, switching direction on a word of command, waiting for the next number call.

My son is taking his weekly session at a local outfit named Fitness Through Boxing, run from a modest storefront near us, and containing a full-size boxing ring, some bags, and a small gym area fitted out with benches and free weights. We come here every Wednesday evening for an hour: Danny to take the training, I to catch up on magazine reading.

FTB is the brainchild of a local amateur boxer, Rob Vanacore. Rob told me he fell in love with boxing in 1971, when he was nine, the night of the tremendous first Ali–Frazier fight. From that moment on Rob belonged to the small, blessed band of human beings whose life is fired with a determination to do just one thing really well. He started out practicing with a neighborhood kid named Tony. They had only one pair of gloves, so they wore one glove each, taking turns so left and right both got a workout. Tony went on to join the U. S. Army, boxed professionally in Europe, and won a junior-middleweight championship. Rob—who, at 5'8" and 147 lbs., boxes welterweight—worked as a pizza-maker for a few years, but he worked only in order to box. The great event for amateur boxers in the New York area is the local Golden Gloves, a competition run by the *Daily News*. Rob chased the championship for 14 years, making it to the semifinals twice.

Tony is back in the neighborhood now, working at the gym with Rob. A large and superbly muscled man, Tony would be very intimidating but for inborn good nature and tireless enthusiasm. Earlier in the evening I'd seen him sparring with one of the more advanced students, a boy of about 17. Ducking, weaving, skipping easily to and fro, Tony was a marvel to watch. I talked with the teenager afterwards. "With a regular sparring partner," the lad groused, "you throw a punch, three times out of four you'll hit his glove. With Tony, you never hit *anything*. By the time your glove gets there, Tony's some place else."

I can't call myself a great boxing fan. I've always liked the sport, but never followed it closely. If I'm channel surfing and catch a boxing match in progress, I'll stop and watch it through—that's about the limit of my enthusiasm. I had a brief moment of glory at age 13 when the gym teacher at our boys-only school organized a boxing tournament, with a ring set up in the school auditorium. Though a fundamentally unathletic kid, I was going through a growth spurt, and, as often happens, different parts were growing at different speeds. The part of me that was growing fastest at this particular moment was my arms. I looked like a gibbon. At our low skill level this gave me a great advantage. With decent wind and some grasp of basic technique, I could hold off any opponent till he tired enough to give me an easy opening. I won all my bouts. The glory didn't last long—does it ever? The gym teacher left that year, his successors had no interest in boxing, and society soon passed into a zone where the idea of 13-year-old boys punching one another's faces for educational purposes became as unthinkable as the dense fug of tobacco smoke in our school's staff room.



(Though I note that in colleges, at any rate, the sweet science is in something of a renaissance. College boxing, which seemed to have died out in the late 1960s, was re-established in 1976, and the National Collegiate Boxing Association now includes about 30 teams. For this factlet, and other fascinating insights, see Gordon Marino's article "Boxing and the Cool Halls of Academe" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* of August 13. I would give a lot to be able to style myself, as Marino does, "a former boxer, . . . professor of philosophy, curator of the Kierkegaard Library, and assistant football coach.")

Danny likes this place. Last year we let him try some Chinese martial-arts classes, but they didn't "take." Boxing seems to have "taken." I am not sure why this is. Rob, like most boxers, holds the oriental fighting styles in low esteem. "Put me against one of those guys—I'll knock him flat." Speaking as a person who once watched the late Bruce Lee up close and personal, I have my doubts; though I recall that Lee himself was a keen observer of Western boxing techniques, and incorporated some of them into his own very individual style.

I like it here myself, I must say. Perhaps I should set aside my magazines and join in the training with my son. There is an agreeable and good-humored atmosphere in a boxing gym that cannot but be healthful for a growing boy to inhale. Robert A. Heinlein famously remarked that "an armed society is a polite society." Well, a trained fighter is always armed. It is an odd paradox of human nature, seen in sergeants' messes as well as boxing gyms, that there is never more ease of manner, concentration on mastering tasks and skills, and warm fellowship among men than when they have come together in a group to perform lawful acts of physical violence.

It is of course an open question how much longer boxing will be lawful in our feminized, lawyered-up society. Rob makes his customers sign a sheaf of waivers before they can put on the gloves. For a while longer yet, though, a boy can still come to a place like this and learn how to take on others in physical combat with skill, courage, and discipline, as men have done since time began. **NR**

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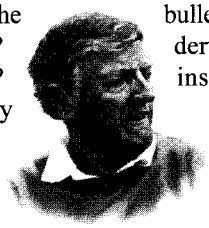
WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Saddam Lives

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 5

It seems curious that as long ago as March 2003, we tried to kill Saddam Hussein. We had it all worked out that he was in hiding at a particular dwelling in Baghdad, and we launched a missile attack against it. Our eagerness was such that we were willing to initiate the military engagement against Iraq hours before general operations were scheduled. The clouds of doubt on the legality of the war weren't quite so vividly drawn, in March '03, the U.N. position being that we needed a supplementary vote to proceed, the U.S.-Brit position being that existing resolutions were actionable. In any event, our anxiety then to kill Saddam Hussein is in sharp contrast to our desire now to keep him alive until some judicial body (unspecified, at the moment) escorts him—where? To the gallows? To another jail?



A formal trial began in July and faced immediate difficulties. To begin with, there is the question of the detachment of Saddam Hussein from his large executive retinue. We have an estimated 5,500 Iraqis under lock and key and have not yet arrived at a judgment on how many of them are to be tried as criminals. But we did train particular attention on eleven people in intimate association with Saddam Hussein, and right away the question arose whether they should all be tried together.

This would not mean necessarily that they would be tried en banc. We could proceed as in Nuremberg, laying down the corporate case against the Saddam regime, and then enunciating, one by one, the specific liability of each individual defendant. In Nuremberg there were 22, and the sentences varied from hanging (11) to exoneration (3).

By what standards should Saddam be charged? At Nuremberg we articulated a law that did not exist, a law against wars of aggression. By some readings, we engaged therefore in ex post facto proceedings strictly forbidden by the U.S. Constitution. We were attempting, in 1945, to promulgate universal laws defining war crimes. We did this, and don't really need to make the point all over again, because there are plenty of local laws violated under Saddam Hussein. It's not legal, under Islamic practice or Iraqi law, to slaughter other Iraqis, let alone tens of thousands of them.

The work of Saddam can vividly be described as the work of Satan. Meanwhile, the man responsible is in an undisclosed military compound in or near Baghdad. What hems in the prosecution is the thousands of Iraqis who have filed complaints against Saddam et al. on behalf of family members allegedly murdered by the regime. In order to examine these complaints thoroughly, one would need, among other things, to dig up cemeteries containing thousands of corpses, presumably in search of bullet holes or broken heads. To undertake this in a country in which insurrectionaries, many of them surviving Baathist supporters of Saddam Hussein, strike out every day against the coalition powers, against the Iraqi government, against the police, is simply not feasible. The prosecution needs drastically to reduce the number of plaintiffs and the scope of their complaints, in order to proceed against discrete crimes with available witnesses, who would presumably need to testify secretly, in shrouded courtrooms. But of course when such practices as those are resorted to, cries of victors' justice spring forth and ACLU-types are there to plead the invalidation of the trial.

It is piquant that the man we tried to kill with a surprise missile attack flaunts judicial extravagances to stay alive even as his dispossessed supporters continue to terrorize and to kill. If we can't arraign, prosecute, convict, and hang Saddam Hussein, his supporters will be encouraged by western ambivalence, and a natural and commendable public thirst for symbolic vindication will continue unslaked.

Dissimulation Reigns

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 8

Attention focuses on what exactly went through the minds of the major players on the scene. When John Kerry voted to authorize military action by the president, did he expect such action to be taken? If he expected something else, what was it? A supererogatory resolution by the Security Council? If so, why did he not stress the need for it at the time?

As for Mr. Bush, when he declaimed that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, did he really believe this? If not, he went to extraordinary pains to behave as though he did, which included going to war. And before that, supporting detachments of U.N. inspectors who prodded about that huge country looking for WMDs until they were kicked out by Saddam. These inspectors were succeeded, at war's end, by U.S. military investigators who reported every day on what they found, which was mostly nothing.

What is most interesting is the question: What on earth was going on in the mind of Saddam? A man who builds himself one hundred palaces has a high investment in longevity. But here was this autocrat in Baghdad teasing into combat the United States. He had had a keen experience of U.S. military power only twelve years before. What was the Republican Guard supposed to come up with that would repel the invader? Weapons of mass destruction?

That is what was feared by the United States. Perhaps not nuclear weapons—these were thought to be inoperative, ever since Israel struck Iraq's nuclear facilities in 1981. The talk was of chemical weapons and biological weapons. But not only were such weapons not deployed, the inspection team headed by Mr. Duelfer reports that they were not extant. So what, one repeats, was Saddam counting on that would permit him an uninterrupted lifetime in his palaces?

We have learned through Duelfer that Saddam was a super-confident scofflaw, perhaps the richest in history. Iraq's oil production had been between 3 and 3.5 million barrels per day. When the trading ban was activated, in 1990, oil sales were cut off. But quickly there was a hue

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and cry that the primary victims of the embargo were Iraqi civilians. Along came the Oil for Food program, which allowed the sale of 2.1 million barrels per day of Iraqi oil as a means of generating income to feed those civilians.

We are talking about a great deal of money. Two-plus million barrels per day yields 766 million barrels per year. If the oil was fetching a measly $15 per barrel, we are talking about $11,490 billion. We know now that a great scandal was born. We don't yet know how many profiteers were on the scene, but there is reason to guess that they were numerous.

But Saddam surely knew who they were. His attitude toward the embargo was lordly in its arrogance. He reassured military leaders at a meeting in January 2000, that he would have no trouble getting the materiel he wanted: "We have said with certainty that the embargo will not be lifted by a Security Council resolution, but will corrode by itself."

Was he ever right on that point. The Duelfer report is extremely informative in tracking down foreign agencies that violated the embargo and shipped sophisticated military equipment to Saddam. It quotes an Iraqi memo stating that the deputy general manager of Sofema, a French military-component marketer, would be bringing to Baghdad a company catalog so that Iraqi officials could "discuss your needs with him."

The principal suppliers were North Korea and Belarus. But here is a handy list of nations whose arms producers, scorning the U.N., trafficked with Saddam: Jordan, China, India, South Korea, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon, Georgia, Poland, Romania, Taiwan, Italy, and Turkey. Oh yes, and there were two U.S. citizens doing a little business with Baghdad. They were Shaker al-Khafaji and Samir Vincent.

So we have an odd coincidence. The coalition powers, led by the U.S., believe that Saddam has weapons sufficient to repel the U.S. and to threaten other nations. Saddam thinks the very same thing. The U.S. acts on its assumption (it invades), and Saddam acts on the same assumption (he does nothing to abort war). And a lot of countries whose merchants violated the U.N. embargo are angry with the United States for proceeding to war against a country whose threat against others could only have been realized by successful defiance of the U.N. embargo.

Long Live Oil

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 13

Mrs. Kerry's reference to "greed for oil" can be passed over, and is being passed over, as routine political hyperbole. But maybe the time has come to examine the words and their meaning. This is so because "oil" is widely used as the great engine of human avarice. In years—and centuries—gone by, the devil word was "gold." It was gold that brought out the reserves of evil in men. It ranked with and even exceeded love & sex. Oil could not, of course, go through hobgoblinization until its uses were discovered. But now it is used as the commonplace agent of evil.

What needs to be said about oil is that it is worth fighting for. We would all agree that without air and water life instantly ends. Without oil, life does not end, but life radically changes.

If one contemplates oil as simply an agent of energy, the idea becomes instantly clearer. Every advance by mankind against the material duress of life is most easily expressed in terms of energy spared. Electrical power is generated in part by running water and by nuclear energy. But mostly it is created by oil and gas. What is it that a people is willing to fight for? The security of home and hearth come first, and that is achieved mostly by weaponry; but weapons that seek to have their effects beyond the range of a cartridge of gunpowder do so, on battleships and airplanes, by the propellant force of oil.

If you are willing to die in order to protect your local hospital, then you must be willing to die for oil, because without oil, your hospital won't take you beyond a surgeon's scalpel, and a surgeon is helpless without illumination, which is provided (mostly) by oil.

To say that we must not fight for oil is utter cant. To fight for oil is to fight in order to maintain such sovereignty as we exercise over the natural world. Socialism plus electricity, Lenin said at the outset of the Soviet revolution, would usher in the ideal state. He was wrong about socialism but not about electricity. Electricity gives us whatever leverage we have over nature. To flit on airily about an unwillingness to fight for oil suggests an indifference to the alleviation of poverty at the next level after bread and water. Throw in, perhaps, the wheel. That too is an indispensable scaffolding of human power over nature. But then comes all the power not generated by the muscles of human beings and beasts of burden.

Oddly, those who speak lightly about oil are often the most reluctant to explore seriously alternatives to it. In the history of discovery, only one such has materialized, which is nuclear power. Although nuclear power proceeds to light most of the lamps in France and promises to do as much in China, a mix of superstition and Luddism stands in the way of developing the nuclear alternative here.

Meanwhile, we must get on with oil, and the reserves of it are diminishing, and such great storehouses of oil as exist are mostly in the Middle East. The idea that our effort in Iraq is motivated by lust for its oil fields is easily dispelled by asking who is today profiting from such oil as is being produced in Iraq? The answer is—the Iraqis. The great need now is for increased security forces deployed to protect the oil from the nihilists and from those who reduce any consideration of oil to politics. What is achieved, that any sober judgment will approve of, by the destruction of oil fields, the kind of thing that Saddam Hussein tried to do in Kuwait in 1991?

It's unlikely, given the spook that attaches to the mere mention of oil, that the presidential candidates will say wholesome things on the subject. But it would bring fresh air to international discourse if we heard from either or both that oil is a great natural bounty, and that we must encourage its production, guard against its despoliation, and honorably defend it as worth a total national commitment.

—Universal Press Syndicate

"The president said today that the economy is healing, but he also warned everybody not to 'pick at it.'"

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

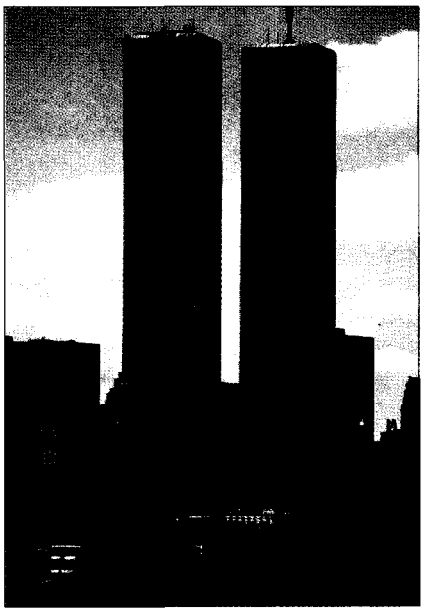
Prediction City

THIS election can't end soon enough, and it probably won't, not with thousands of Democrat lawyers circling the courthouses of selected battleground states. It's necessary for Bush not just to win, but to win big enough to compensate for the gazillions of New York residents registering to vote in Florida, and for the massed ranks of chad-diviners waiting to descend if that proves insufficient.

But Bush owes us a big win anyway. A squeaker will not be good for America and it ought to prompt some serious reflection among Republicans on why the president didn't use his 80 percent approval ratings three years ago to make a serious attempt to shift the political culture. More on this anon, either in our Extra-Embittered All-Recriminations Issue or in our Now That He's Back In, We Can Start Whining and Complaining Again Special.

But, as it happens, I think he'll win, and win convincingly enough. In 2000, Al Gore lost because he had no appeal to rural white men, who, despite his claims to be a Tennessee farmer, reacted to him as if he were some effete ninny from Massachusetts. Four years on, the Dems have replaced the faux effete ninny with the genuine article. Arkansas, West Virginia, and Tennessee will be sticking with Bush, and Maine's Second Congressional District will join them.

Every loser spinning as he descends says he doesn't believe the polls, but it does seem to me when you look at them that there's something a little Squaresville about the whole racket. It's 9/10 polling, and I'm not sure it catches some of the shifts. For example, everyone keeps talking about New Jersey as a "solidly Democrat state," as if it were a complete mystery and aberration that it's suddenly a swinger. It's true that, in normal circumstances, New Jersey shouldn't be in play. So what's abnormal this election cycle? Well, there was that thing that happened just over the Hudson River three years ago that kinda changed the look of the skyline . . . How many New Jersey commuters to Manhattan feel reassured by Kerry on terrorism? A sliver of "9/11 Democrats" declined to support their party in the 2002 elections. Will there be more or fewer this time?



Remember them?

Well, consider Martin Peretz, the executive supremo of *The New Republic* and a big buddy of Al Gore. Four years ago, he was as chad-hungry as every other Democrat, sticking loyally by Al's side through one spurious legal move after another. Those of us who took the Bush side in the Florida re-re-re-re-re-count were swatted aside, in my case as "an ugly little article by one Mark Steyn." (Gotta love that "one Mark Steyn" business, a favorite formulation of snooty American media grandees.) Mr. Peretz was also one of those Democrats aesthetically revolted by Dubya. "George W.," he sneered, "may not know much of anything. The other night on television, the Texas governor introduced his dog to the American people, and—do you believe it?—his dog is named Spot." By contrast, Al Gore had the taste and sophistication to call his pooches "Shiloh" and "Daisy." Mr. Peretz's strange judgmentalism on canine nomenclature embodied the vicious partisanship of the day: Cry havoc and let slip the war of dogs!

But four years on the great man turns up in the *Los Angeles Times* with a column called "Kerry the Clueless." Clueless on what? Israel, mainly. The senator, says Peretz, is wedded to "the failed precepts of the past" and would put us on "a road map to nowhere."

If a Gore sidekick like Mr. Peretz can put aside his chad obsession and stylistic distaste for the Texas moron in favor of strategic clarity, how many other Democrats can? If a relatively tiny number of Jewish retirees feel as strongly about Kerry's cluelessness as Mr. Peretz, Florida's safe for Bush, and New Mexico could fall his way, too.

So my bet is that this year it's the Republicans who have the big tent, from the tri-state bridge-'n'-tunnel crowd to Marty Peretz to Pat Buchanan (who's just endorsed Bush in the magazine he launched to declare his disgust at him) to 24-year-old Alexandra Wolfe, daughter of Tom, who told the *Sunday Times* of London she'd be voting for Bush. ("If I say it out loud, it's death . . . People look at you like you are a freak. I believe in abortion and I totally believe Kerry is right on some social issues, but I just don't trust him on terrorism.")

I don't think the Hail Mary Cheney pass and promises of the crippled rising from their wheelchairs will make any difference to the likes of Miss Wolfe. And, more worrying for Kerry, those afflicted who can already rise from their sickbeds seem disinclined to do so. "Clinton Expected To Be at Fewer Kerry Events: Recuperation from Surgery Is Taking Time," reported the *Washington Post.* "Kerry officials had hoped that Clinton might spend some of the closing weeks of the campaign on the Democratic nominee's plane, appearing arm in arm at rallies in swing states," but apparently his physicians have ruled it "out of the question."

Hmm.

So I'm optimistic. If, when next we meet, John Kerry is president-elect, I'll look like a complete idiot.

But that will be the least of it. **NR**

JAY CLARKE

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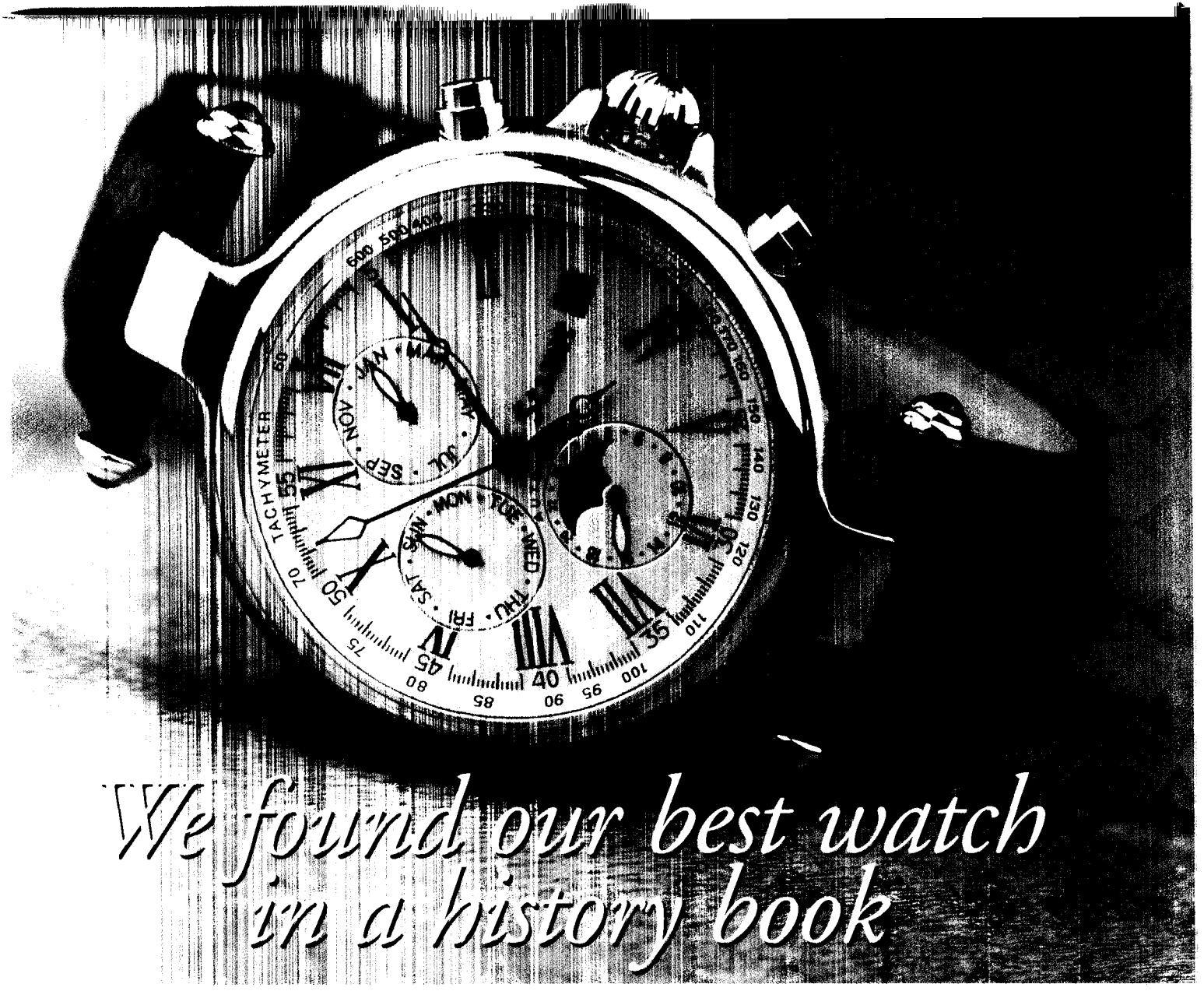

We found our best watch in a history book

In 1922, a small watchmaker in Switzerland designed the first automatic watch to display the day, month and date. Only 7 of these magnificent timepieces were ever made and this watch was almost lost to history. Today, they are so rare that our watch historians are willing to bid $300,000 for an original in mint condition.

These watches were among the most stylish of the roaring 20's. The Stauer watch design that you see here has the antique color, the vintage style and the innovative functions of the original that we have seen in a Swiss museum. Even the Breguet™ style hands are designed from the original. The owner of this legendary multi-functional watch is sure to look distinguished and set apart from the crowd. This Stauer watch is a limited edition, allowing you to wear a watch far more exclusive than many luxury brands.

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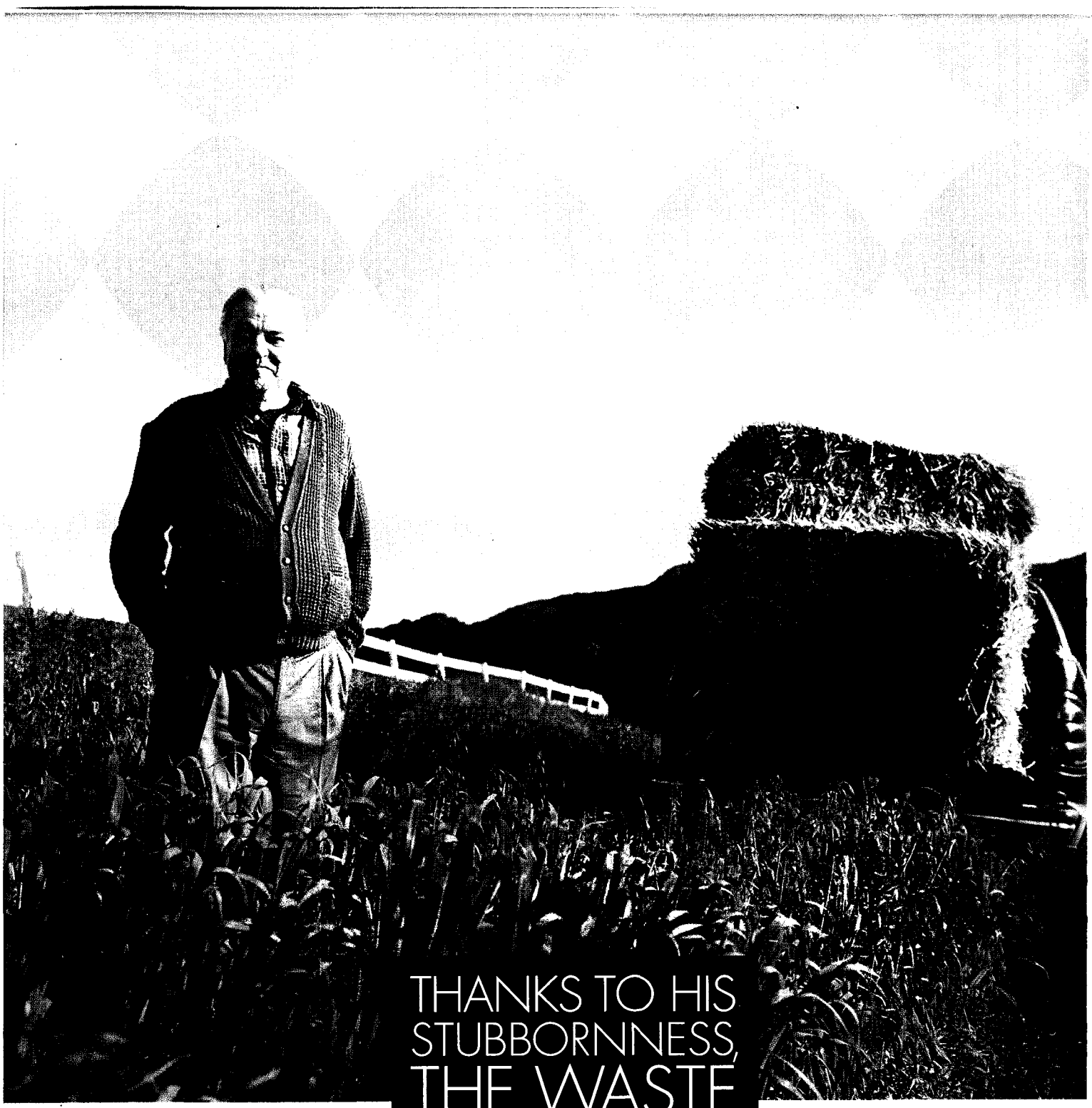

THANKS TO HIS STUBBORNNESS, THE WASTE ON THIS TRUCK CAN BE USED TO FUEL IT.

Patrick Foody Sr. is a determined man. Some 30 years ago, he had a visionary idea. He would produce ethanol, a vital ingredient in transportation fuels, from agricultural wastes like cereal straws and cornstalks. Contemporaries doubted him. Initial attempts were costly. Still, Pat and his colleagues at Iogen Corporation pressed on. After much dogged persistence, and with help from Shell, they found ways to make large-scale production a commercial reality. It may be a while yet before alternatives such as EcoEthanol™ can become a major source of energy. But by seeking out partners like Pat, we're hoping to bring that day a step closer. Visit www.shell.com/biofuels for more information.

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